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ABSTRACT

Recently, the use of thematic units in the teaching of language arts at the secondary level has significantly increased. This document discusses the theory and practice of using thematic units. The first section provides an overview of the use of thematic units and shows how such units can aid in teaching students about the composing process, literature, the English language, oral communication, and various media forms. The second section presents units for helping students explore the search for identity, the concept of brotherhood, the hero/heroine concept, and past and present roles and goals of women. For each unit, the document provides a course description and suggested achievement level, lists thematic and language arts objectives, suggests materials, and describes a number of learning activities. Section three suggests materials and possible activities for additional units dealing with decision making, death, science fiction, people under pressure, and success and failure. (GW)

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Thematic Unit Planning:

English and the Humanities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Theory 1

The Composing Process 5
Literature 7
The English Language 12
Oral English 16
Media 21

Practice (Thematic Units) 24

Identity 24
Brotherhood 33
Heroism 41
Women 48

Resources for Units 56

Decisions 56
Death 58
Science Fiction 60
People Under Pressure. 61
Success-Failure 63

THEORY

Educators have been discussing how best to teach the language arts to secondary school students for many years. English education instructors in colleges and universities, high school English teachers, and elementary teachers as well have shared the concern of making English teaching as effective as possible and, at the same time, structuring it in such a way as to make the presentation as relevant as possible to the students' needs, abilities, and interests.

In an attempt to continue this discussion, this book includes an explication of the theory and practice of one particular curriculum design--thematic unit--which, in the opinion of the authors, meets the needs as an effective approach in the teaching of oral and written composition, literature, language, and media.

Thematic unit planning is not new, even though the current use of it may be. As far back as 1935,[1] The Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English advocated the idea of thematic planning.

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[1] W. Wilbur Hatfield, An Experience Curriculum in English, New York: Appleton-Century, 1935.

As a result of the Curriculum Commission's statement, some unit teaching occurred and a few anthologies were organized thematically. However, due to many factors, one of which was the lack of consistency in understanding the unit concept, the use of thematic units was not widespread. To give more credence to the concept, the National Council of Teachers of English established some guidelines by defining a unit as:

> ...varied activities in the language arts...developed around a central theme or purpose clear and significant to the student. It must be sufficiently broad to involve in some measure all four of the language arts.[2]

In general, thematic units have followed this NCTE statement.

Recently, the popularity of these units has increased significantly. Noteworthy is the establishment of a Committee on Thematic Units under the auspices of the National Council of Teachers of English. In the preface of the Committee's publication, the editors make the following statement:

> We are dedicated to the use of a humanistic, thematic approach to the teaching of English. We have experimented with other approaches and have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each, but in our experience a concern with values has been the most successful way of getting students involved in English the way they are involved in life... A thematic approach gives students an opportunity to integrate all the language arts in relation to a theme or a problem, as they do in real life.[3]

Most thematic units are six to nine-week segments of the curriculum in which the language arts—literature, composition, language, and oral English—are taught through the use of a linguistic or social theme. It

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[2]National Council of Teachers of English Curriculum Series. The English Language Arts in the Secondary School. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956, page 69.

[3]Committee on Thematic Units in Literature and the Humanities. Thematic Units in Teaching English and the Humanities. ed. Sylvia Spann and Mary Beth Culp. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1975, page iii.

is important to note that the theme is the means and not the end. It is a vehicle for teaching the language arts.

The thematic unit by design emphasizes process rather than product orientation. A process-oriented program is vital for today's youth. As Dr. Geraldine LaRocque so aptly states in the September, 1971, issue of the English Journal: "Today it is more important than ever that a teacher be a spark plug, not a fuel pipe. It is imperative that we teach youngsters 'how to learn,' and knowing how to learn is knowing the 'process of learning.'"[4] The approach suggested in this book utilizes this very point. Students are able to spend their time more wisely discovering what is important to them as they explore investigatory topics that comprise the thematic units. Students are studying in a curriculum which is based, as Albert Marckwardt suggests, on experience, involvement, and response.[5] Students are experiencing a new approach, a stimulating and rewarding process of discovery; they are involved in relevant quests, seeking and learning answers not to predetermined teacher questions, but to their own queries; and certainly they are responding, hopefully among students in classroom interaction, but perhaps just to themselves as they begin to synthesize the material that they have gathered.

The thematic units offer the structure and content to the curriculum. The units may be linguistically or socially oriented; their length will vary depending upon the subject matter, type of school, and school

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[4] Geraldine LaRocque, "English Curriculum: Process or Product?" English Journal (September, 1971), 781-786.

[5] Albert H. Marckwardt, "Dartmouth and After: Issues in English Language Training," New English; New Imperatives, ed. Henry B. Maloney Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1971, page 19.

calendar. The process of determining the content of each unit is best accomplished by a joint effort of teachers and students. Certainly, in this way, individual differences for students in each class are taken into consideration when decisions occur after the enrollment has been completed. Of course, some pre-planning of curriculum will have taken place by teachers within the department. The organization and structure are limited only by the imagination and resources of students and teachers.

These thematic units are important in that they provide a means for the experience, involvement, and response mentioned earlier. Students spend their time questioning, probing material that is important to them now. That is not to say, however, that literature of the past is not appropriate for study. Quite the contrary, there are many units in which this material can be effectively used. The important point is that any unit is not limited to any specific literary period, genre, style, etc.; but material from all these areas is utilized under one unifying theme. In addition, all the language arts are included. Teachers incorporate the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening into each unit. Thus, whatever the unit happens to be, literature, composition, speeches, and other oral work are organized around a particular theme. Teachers and students can also make effective use of the other resources such as film, recordings, drama, music, newspapers, and magazines.

How can this approach be of some use to the secondary school teacher of English? The answer seems obvious. If a teacher is in a traditional situation, thematic units may be used throughout the school year; if, however, the teacher is in a more innovative program with English electives, the teacher simply uses each unit as a course in itself. Thus, the unit approach offers a means by which teachers can more easily meet the

individual needs and interests of their students no matter what the teaching situation.

The Composing Process*

For many years, teachers have been searching for methods and curriculum designs that are conducive to effective and enjoyable writing programs. They have suggested a number of approaches: the generative rhetoric of Francis Christensen,[6] the traditional five-paragraph theme,[7] and the writing program of Ken Macrorie.[8] While these approaches, and many more not mentioned, do emphasize writing pedagogy for schools, they fail, it seems to us, to show how these writing programs fit into the total English curriculum; equally important, they fail to show how the curriculum itself plays a part in the composing process.

In the proposed writing program students operate with "freedom and discipline--freedom to follow the directions of one's own movement, and the discipline of considering the response of others to it."[9] Students write within a context that suggests that writing is an individual's search for meaning in life and that a student should use his language to explore his world. In sum, the writer experiments with the process of writing.

Before any writing has taken place, however, students engage in

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[6]Francis Christensen, Notes Toward a New Rhetoric: Six Essays for Teachers, New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

[7]Duane C. Nichols, "The Five-Paragraph Essay: An Attempt to Articulate," in Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett, eds., Teaching High School Composition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

[8]Ken Macrorie, Writing to Be Read, New York: Hayden Book Co., 1968. and Uptaught, New York: Hayden Book Co., 1970.

[9]Macrorie, Uptaught, page 167.

*The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Sandra Zerger, Hesston, Kansas, in preparing this section.

pre-writing activities.[10] They are encouraged to discuss their views with others; they "play" with language, making it fresh, alive, and workable; they sharpen their senses and, as a result, their descriptive powers are more acute. Writing activities such as these scattered throughout the thematic units help the students to better understand their world and their relationship to it.

Initially, students write for short periods of time, but quite frequently. The emphasis is on communication--having something to write and writing it to someone else. As the program continues, more focused writing occurs. The ideas expressed come from the students' experience, both from their childhood and the discussions that occur in the thematic units. Sharing, criticizing, and revising are other important facets of this program. When students finish a particular piece of writing, they share it with their peers, not as a finished product, but as a piece of writing that is still in process. They receive feedback from their peers as well as from their teacher. In the early stages, this feedback is in the form of positive criticism; the negative criticism occurs later. The next step is usually revision. The writers select one piece of writing to revise, keeping in mind a few selected suggestions that were given to them by their classmates.

The writing is evaluated and criticized but not graded. Because the writing is rarely considered as a product, grading seems impossible and

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[10]The reader may want to consult the following reference for a description of pre-writing and its relationship to the composing process: D. Gordon Rohman, "Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process," College Composition and Communication, XVI (May, 1965), 106-112. Also, the following work is suggested for additional reading: Donald Stewart, The Authentic Voice: A Pre-Writing Approach to Student Writing. Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown, 1972.

is certainly not desirable. Students know how they are progressing; they receive much constructive criticism from their peers and the teacher.

As one can see, the emphasis in this writing program is on process writing. The theory is that the thought processes and writing behavior occur concurrently. Therefore, students are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings in a form that is meaningful to them and at the same time in a way that will warrant the attention of others. Emphasis is given to ideas and expression, not to structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. Only after the students have lived with their writing for some time, when they have received feedback from their peers and teacher, and when they have attempted the process of revision, are they concerned with the formal editing processes.

Our experience tells us that students in this writing program want to write; they want to share their writing; they find the process most enjoyable; and most important, they write well. Because the thematic unit emphasizes process, involvement, experience, and response; and because the unit includes many diverse activities in the subject matter and pedagogy, the composing process seems to be a natural extension of the thematic unit.

Literature

When juniors in high school attend the first meeting of their English program and find that they will be reading Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, Frost's Death of a Hired Man, Armstrong's Sounder, Williams' The Glass Menagerie, Granburg's"A Trip to Czardis," and King's "I Have a Dream," they might question such a peculiar assemblage in their high school English class: How do they fit in? What relationship do they have with each other? They certainly don't fit into an American literature survey course--too many periods missing; they aren't part of a genre course--too much variety.

The students soon realize, however, that they are in a thematic mini-course—this one entitled "America—Hard Times."

Perhaps the primary goal of English teachers is to have their students become personally involved in the literature they read. Hopefully, students can become so involved in their reading that they will make their own personal response instead of relying solely on the literary critics. Teachers must foster within their students enough confidence to make these personal responses. James Britton suggests this point of view when he states "the voice of the critic must not be allowed to seem the voice of authority...it is all too easy for the immature student, feeling that his own responses are unacceptable, to disown them and profess instead the opinions of respected critics."[11]

That is not to say that critics have no place in the English classroom. They do. However, their place should be kept in perspective to the goals of the class. The critics' responses are to be thought of not as better or worse than those of the students, but as equals. They have other points of view, of course, distinguished with more experience and maturity; but their position does not supersede the responses of the students.

All of this is to say that students should become actively involved with literature that they read. The experience should be enjoyable and successful. To accomplish this, many educators believe that the method often used in the classroom needs revamping—encouraging more personal involvement by the students. When teachers foster this classroom attitude

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[11]James Briton, "Response to Literature," Response to Literature. James Squire, ed., Urbana, Illinois: N.C.T.E., 1968, page 6.

they will help students, as J. N. Hook has said, "to enjoy literature and to read voluntarily, not to regard its reading as a task to be avoided if at all possible."[12]

How then does the thematic course design help to implement the preceding philosophy of teaching literature. First of all, due to the theme itself, the students bring a great deal more enthusiasm to the particular unit than they previously did with the traditional English program. This is especially true if the thematic unit is a part of the mini-course curriculum. Surveys indicate some thematic use with mini-courses, and a few schools have incorporated thematic units into their traditional yearly English courses. With this new and fresh approach to English, students are more at ease and more willing to participate in a number of classroom activities which call for their personal involvement in oral and written responses. At present, students are very eager to question, probe, and discuss the literature found in the thematic units and, as a result, are making a personal response to what they read.

A second important distinction of the thematic unit which fosters student involvement is that thematic courses are dominated by neither historical nor formal characteristics. Thus, students do not have as their primary goal to find out how a particular work fits into an over-all historical survey nor do they spend the majority of their time trying to delineate the formal characteristics of the work, e.g., a novel, short story, or poem. While it is important to note these characteristics in literature study, they do not command primary attention.

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[12]J. N. Hook. The Teaching of High School English. 4th Ed. New York: Ronald Press, 1972, page 126.

The attention is given to the work itself--what authors have to say and how they say it. By design the thematic course enables the students to make a more personal response to the literature and the related problems that they face from day to day. Other courses--genre and survey--by design put the emphasis on a different focus. The thematic course focuses on the students experiencing literature, not simply studying it.

The question of what literature to include in English curriculum has been discussed for many years. Some educators feel very strongly that there is a body of knowledge--a set of literary works--in English, that most students, and some would say every student, should know by the time they finish their formal education. Other educators, of course, take a different view. James E. Miller, former president of N.C.T.E. insists "Literature is not a body of knowledge to be learned." He continues by stating that the function of literature is to provide "a confrontation with life" and that it has lasting meaning "only if it leads to personal discovery."[13] Therefore, it would follow that not every student, necessarily, should be confronted with the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Joyce, etc. Too, the major criteria that should be used in determining the choice of literature included in the curriculum are student interest and ability, as well as the appropriateness of a given work for a particular school and community. Contemporary literature, especially the adolescent novels, would most assuredly find their way into curricula designed by teachers favoring this second approach but would probably be in conflict with attitudes expressed by those favoring the first position.

How literature will be arranged in the curriculum is another common

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[13]James E. Miller, quoted in Hook. Page 130.

discussion question among curriculum designers. Proponents of the genre design suggest that an in-depth study of a particular form of literature will enable the student to better appreciate the work for having studied its form and structure. Proponents of the survey design suggest the historical overview of literature is most beneficial. It seems to us that the course designs themselves—generic and survey—have the wrong emphasis and this occurs simply due to the design itself. An additional problem is that often a steady diet of one particular form of literature for a 6, 9, or 18-week period may prove to be very boring for the student, especially for those who are not particularly interested in literature. Also, it seems incongruous to good teaching to exclude various other literary works quite appropriate to the topic under discussion simply because they do not fit the particular form. It would seem most beneficial to include these various works so that students can read not only differing viewpoints, but also see how each author uses different genres to express thoughts on similar topics. There are times when too much of a good thing may prove to be a liability rather than an asset! One additional problem besetting the survey courses is that works from later periods—Twentieth Century literature and contemporary literature—often are not studied simply due to lack of time. Therefore, much more current literature is often not read by students.

Thematic unit planning is an effort to teach the entire language arts without the disadvantages heretofore mentioned concerning other course designs. One of the strengths of this curriculum concept is the variety of activities, particularly in the literature selections. Certainly the wide range of genres in any thematic unit motivates the students to become more involved in the course.

In the past, one of the major problems in English classes has been to meet the needs of all students. This problem has been alleviated somewhat by having students select their own courses in the new mini-course curriculum. However, the problem still exists within each classroom. Although students may choose a particular course, there still may be a wide range of interests and abilities within any group of 30 students.

The thematic unit alleviates this problem. Students not having a steady diet of a particular genre may be served very well with the variety of selections that are available within any given theme. The theme itself may provide extra incentive since with all probability the theme has specific relevance to the students' own world. Courses such as "The Outsiders," "The School Scene," "Search for Love," or "Revolution and the Establishment" most assuredly are more attractive than courses such as "Survey of American Literature" or "Modern British Poetry." It is, of course, important to note that many of the same works that might appear in these latter courses may also appear in the thematic units.

The English Language

The secondary school curriculum has few English language activities. Unfortunately, this is true not only in the traditional curriculum but also in the innovative mini-course electives as well. George Hillocks, Jr., in his book Alternatives in English: A Critical Appraisal of Elective Programs presents a similar point of view. In his tabulation of the descriptions of the 1,990 courses studied, it is noted that only three percent of all courses dealt with the medium of expression, i.e., using language as language. He states: "The student's role as an interpreter of messages is highly valued, whereas his role as a composer receives far less emphasis, even assuming that all courses include both speaking and

writing. The study of language as language is virtually ignored in most programs; in a good many programs it is totally ignored."[14] Hillocks further describes these courses by ranking the categories of courses in terms of the number of schools offering at least one course of a particular type. After structuring the ranking, he concludes: "The dominance of literature is indicated by the fact that of the 25 course types offered by 20 or more schools, 12 are literature courses, and three other types... give primacy to reading. Nearly 61 percent of all courses...are literature or reading courses. No type of language course appears."[15]

Perhaps at first glance the lack of language courses would not be too disheartening if indeed language activities were included in the curriculum elsewhere. However, if we can assume that Hillock's study is generalizable, we can almost certainly suggest that these language activities do not exist elsewhere. They would most commonly be found in a thematic unit. However, the survey indicates that only 10 percent of the courses were thematic in nature and these courses, too, even though thematic, were extremely literature dominated.

A more recent study[16] corroborates Hillock's findings. When surveyed about their teaching of the English language in thematic units, over a third of the Kansas teachers surveyed replied that they spent 10 percent or less time on language study in their units.

This lack of English language study is really not new, nor is it

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[14]George Hillocks, Jr. Alternatives in English: A Critical Appraisal of Elective Programs, Urbana, Illinois: N.C.T.E., 1972, page 24.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Unruh, Sherry L. "A Study of the Use of Thematic Units in Kansas Junior and Senior High Schools." Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Kansas, 1976.

surprising when we consider the courses offered by English departments in colleges and universities for prospective teachers. The college and university English curricula are so literature dominated it is no wonder that little is done with language study in high schools.

The language component of the English curriculum is important and should be made an integral part of the program of study. If students are aware of the language that they speak and if they know of the linguistic choices available to them, they will participate to a greater degree in the community in which they learn, play, and make a living.[17] It seems to us that "man's ability to understand himself and others, and thus to effect change in himself and others, is deeply dependent on his ability to use his language effectively."[18] In order to do this, teachers should design curriculum giving students the opportunity to explore the nature of language, its structure, and usage items pertinent to Standard English as well as other varieties of English. They should explore language heritage, geographical and social dialects, semantics, and the "silent language" as well. All of these areas offer students vast resources for study. In addition, they offer students a chance to broaden their linguistic repertoire and, therefore, help them to exert an influence on the community in which they live.

J. N. Hook suggests views concerning language teaching in that he believes its teaching "should be broadly conceived."[19] In the past, and perhaps in some schools in the present, emphasis has been placed in a very limited way on one language area: grammar. The thought was that the study

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[17]John H. Bushman, "The Power of Language: Can the Student Survive Without It?" English Journal, November, 1970.

[18]Ibid., page 1091.

[19]Hook, page 331.

of grammar and usage—the right and wrong of language—would make students better writers and speakers. Teachers found out that not only did this not happen, but also the students disliked the process vehemently. With the broader concept of language teaching, grammar may be included but in a language context that sees it, along with other language areas, as an "exciting human activity."[20]

Hook continues:

> The broader emphasis that now seems more appropriate does not ignore grammar and usage but places them in this context. Children learn that "right" and "wrong" are relative terms; linguistically what is "right" in one century or in one situation may be "wrong" in another. They explore the sociology of language: what people do with language and what language does with, to, and for people. They consider why people don't all talk alike and they come to realize that the use of a "different" dialect is no sign of inferiority or superiority as a human being. They learn that the English language has changed through the centuries, that it is still changing, and that throughout their lives it will continue to change. They play with the language, experiment with it, become familiar with the richness of its resources, and learn more about its potential than about its perils.[21]

Since the thematic unit is designed to include all the language arts, the language component is easily incorporated into the total unit. It matters little whether the theme is socially or linguistically oriented--there is a wealth of material that exists for study in secondary schools. Because there is a wide variety of themes available which in turn provide for a wide variety of literature, there is an abundance of sources for language study. Authors use of dialect, particular word choice, sentence construction, etc., provide students with ample material for study. The theme topics themselves provide the students with an

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.

opportunity to investigate the language unique to those themes. Themes such as "Semantics of Politics," "Communication Breakdown," "Coping with Change," "Media and Language" provide the students with an awareness that language can control and manipulate their thoughts, and also that the open, free discussion of this language control can free them.

Oral English

Oral communication occupies an important place in the classroom. Although oral activities are often labeled "Speech," the usual definition of oral communication actually includes all areas of classroom verbalization, from the simple teacher question--student response to formal speech-making and drama. Because such activities serve as aids to learning in each of the other language arts--composition, literature, and language--oral communication should be an integral part of thematic unit planning if students are to find meaning in the material and ideas they encounter.

Educators have long recognized the necessity for and value of classroom discussion, but the quality of it has slipped until it is often nothing more than a dull recital of names, dates, and other facts. Even well-intentioned teachers may find that the open discussion session they have envisioned becomes instead the familiar "tug-of-war" as they try to pull answers out of unresponsive students. In most cases, this experience leads to "teacher-talk" which requires students to function as sponges--first soaking up information which is then wrung out at exam time. This breeds disenchantment and dissatisfaction. Consequently, oral communication diminishes. There needs to be an essence of give-and-take in effective communication. There is a feeling of challenge and dispute; an aura of revelation and finally understanding. This is the type of oral communication

which is exciting and educational. It grows from a carefully cultivated atmosphere in which creative activities abound. It does not just happen whenever people talk.

To discover how this learning exchange occurs, it is necessary to examine the individual areas of oral communication and the possibilities of each in the classroom. Generally, there are two major categories of oral communication: speech and drama. Speech activities may include, but not be limited to, formal speaking, discussion, conversation, and interviewing; while drama emphasizes pantomiming, role-playing, and improvisation.

The general purpose for speech study in the English class is to develop citizens who can participate satisfactorily in everyday situations which demand oral work. For most people these situations include conversations, discussions, and introductions. For some it may extend into interviews, panels, and platform speaking. No matter what a student decides to do with his life, a competence in some or all of these speech areas is essential. It is important not only to be able to carry on intelligent conversations, but it is vital to individuals to be able to express their thoughts and to establish their own identities by what they do and say.

Speech activities are most valuable not only in helping the students to express their thoughts and develop their confidences but also in helping them to practice their language usage. James Moffett points out:

> Although a student might come to use connectors, expand modifiers, subordinate clauses, and embed sentences just by sheer imprinting—stylistic imitation—I think it is safe to say that such learning would never go far without the functional need for qualification and elaboration arising in dialogue. This is why I do not think exercises with dummy sentences, no matter how superior the grammar, will teach students how to use various linguistic constructions appropriately and

> habitually. The expatiation process of dialogue adjusts a speaker's verbal and cognitive instruments at just the moment when he cares the most and in just the way that he, individually, needs this adjustment.[22]

The various activities usually associated with oral work can also be as sterile and as ineffective as the dummy sentences to which Moffett refers if developed solely for the purpose of memorizing language patterns. It is in this area that thematic unit teaching displays another advantage. Group discussions, impromptu speeches, and interviewing are rewarding activities when dealing with particular social or linguistic themes. Speech activities should evolve in response to reading, writing, and viewing. At the same time students are becoming familiar with particular structures of the language, they may find new insight into a character they only knew on a surface level in their reading.

The second classification of oral communication--drama--is becoming one of the most popular teaching instruments in English classrooms. Not only is it a natural element of language arts courses, but drama is also quite suitable for the thematic unit approach because it involves all activities of people. Drama in the English classroom, however, needs to be defined apart from that which is taught in a course concentrating on performance. Anthony Adams, Chairman of Churchfields Comprehensive School, clarifies this point:

> It is important to distinguish between drama, theatre, and the literary study of dramatic texts. The first is our main concern here and represents a particular form of classroom drama growing largely out of improvisation; we are interested in the education of children in English through drama, not in the production of trained actors and actresses. The concept of 'playing to an audience' is irrelevant to a large part of our concerns, and there may indeed be times in

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[22] James Moffett. Drama: What Is Happening. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967, pages 19-20.

> classroom drama where an audience may be a hindrance or a danger. Thus it is drama at the level of the individual or the group rather than primarily at the level of public presentation which we call theatre, with which we are concerned.[23]

Douglas Barnes concurs:

> ...drama should be seen as part of this classroom talk. Like all talk it may arise from a topic proposed by the teacher, from a shared experience, or from a work of literature. Drama, however, differs from other talk in three ways: movement and gesture play a larger part in the expression of meaning; a group working together upon an improvisation needs more deliberately and consciously to collaborate; the narrative framework allows for repetition and provides unity that enables the action more easily to take on symbolic status—to have meaning beyond the immediate situation in which it occurs.[24]

An objective in the use of drama in a thematic unit, then, is to expand the boundaries of experience for students so that they may develop a more complete understanding of themselves, their work, and their relationships to other people.

Drama in this sense can be used freely within any thematic unit. It is as effective with composition and language as it is with literature. It adds a more exciting dimension to learning and it helps to bring about that effective communication that was described earlier. It is difficult, however, to attempt pantomime, role-playing, and improvisation with a class that has never experienced this level of participation. The "sponge" group mentioned earlier remains self-conscious and hesitant without some cultivation; therefore, warm-up activities are needed.

Improvisation and role-playing complement thematic units. Students

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[23]Anthony Adams, quoted in Douglas Barnes. Drama in the English Classroom. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968, page 9.

[24]Barnes, page 8.

can interpret themes and conflicts in literature by improvising parallel circumstances or they can take characters from the work and place them in other situations through role-playing. For example, in a unit entitled "The Nature of Prejudice," while studying the effects of prejudice in To Kill a Mockingbird, the class can enact different scenes depicting prejudice, such as a white frog being rejected by all the green frogs because of his color, or a group of gentiles reacting to a church exchange with Jews, or an American Indian in a barber shop in Wounded Knee, or a fraternity voting on the only Black pledge. Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," used in the unit "The Community," provides a basis for student improvisations by offering different possible endings for the story. Students studying "Identity" might improvise the delightful "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." Such interpretations which are interesting and full of insight into Mitty's character or that of his wife can easily develop.

The thematic approach to teaching makes it possible for students to see the relationships that exist between all the language arts. Oral communication is a natural thread which runs not only through thematic units in teaching English but also through the entire experience which is education. It is vital that students be aware of the importance of being able to express themselves clearly and freely. It is essential that they not be so sensitive to criticism that they fear their own honesty, yet it is also important that they defend their beliefs and do not feel inhibited. To teach "Speech" and "Drama" in a way that implies separation from other educational experiences is unfair and certainly unrealistic. The thematic approach in education is the realistic way to provide the relevance that is demanded by today's students.

Media

Media plays an important part in each thematic unit since it is a constant force in every student's life. Since students are confronted daily with film, art, recordings, radio, television, photographs, newspapers, and magazines, it is of utmost importance for teachers to capitalize on this close relationship by using the various media effectively in the classroom. Then students can see the effect it makes on their own lives. Media has a natural relationship with thematic learning by broadening thematic units and providing them with still another dimension.

Each media form is a discipline which communicates themes. Since media is thematic itself, it is natural to include it in thematic teaching. In the union of thematic units and media, we can escape the problem that occurs when students fail to relate one aspect of their lives to another. For example, students often do not associate what they study in history with what they study in English. By learning thematically, students grow in the concept that there are relationships between things they encounter. Thematic teaching begins by unifying the various language arts of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Affiliating media with a unit's theme further encourages students to think of broad relationships rather than of small cubicles of knowledge. It is more difficult to apply media to non-thematic traditional teaching and achieve this broadening aspect. Showing a film, for example, still seems unrelated unless a theme that unifies the film, literature, and writing exists. Within any given theme, the use of related media—newspapers, television, film, etc.—strengthens the concept that all learning does not and should not be limited to the formal classroom.

The two traditional uses of media have been to inform students and to encourage creative expression. These functions are still present in thematic units, and are more meaningful to students. The informative type media has a broader application when it is related to a universal theme rather than a narrow aspect of language arts. Creative expression derived from exposure to media is enhanced if students have a general concept on which to base their creativity.

Thematic units are not only conducive to using media, but the reverse is also true—media enhances thematic teaching. Many students have had more experience with forms of media than they have had with literature. For example, some students respond more to seeing a film than to reading a novel. If a film or any other form of media is used to introduce a unit, the theme can be conveyed quickly and may stimulate further interest and even additional reading in the unit. Most media experiences take less time than reading short stories, novels, or plays. Too, introducing units with media allows students to become immediately involved in the discussion of a theme. Another way media enhances a unit is that it can be encountered in the classroom as well as at home. Thereford, students give immediate reactions to it in class. These immediate reactions are sometimes very stimulating. For example, often times students' first reaction to the film An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is surprise. Students do not realize that the man's escape is a dream. Their shock at his hanging creates an emotional discussion of the event. Media may also expand the ideas of a theme that could not be expanded without additional extensive work for students.

Even the teacher with little background and a small budget can use media. Although film rental can become expensive, selective use of film and use of numerous other media, e.g., music, art, pictures, etc., is

worthwhile.

The natural relationship between media and thematic learning in these units is evident. Some of the most successful teaching experiences occur from this relationship. Students respond enthusiastically to media in these units, and their responses make the efforts involved in innovation seem worthwhile. There is a tremendous number of media experiences to provide for students, and these can become more meaningful when they are coordinated with reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a thematic unit.

PRACTICE

We have prepared the following thematic units for a senior high school English mini-course elective system and/or a traditional thirty-six week course concept. The fully developed units presented here are appropriate for grades 10, 11, and 12.

The 9-week units reflect the theory of teaching the language arts presented in the first part of this book. In addition, they reflect how teachers may develop a sequential program in teaching oral English, composition, language, and literature. Therefore, it is important for teachers to use these specific units in order. In the year program, the Identity theme is taught at the beginning followed by the remaining three themes: Brotherhood, Heroes, and Women. In an elective system, while the units are taught in the same sequence, it is important to note that all units offered in each of the 9-week periods should include the same type of skills reflected in these units so that students will benefit from a sequence of program in the language arts no matter what elective they choose. We note the importance of departmental cooperation in this approach.

While we have suggested appropriate materials for these units, teachers may need to make substitutions. Usually teachers can include the same skill/concept even though they may substitute one or more selections in a unit.

THEME: Identity

TITLE: "The Search for Self"

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL:

Students will consider an individual's purpose in life, his/her search for identity, and his/her struggles to protect and maintain the self he/she discovers as these issues have been expressed through literature, film, and

music. Concurrently, students will respond to this theme through oral and written composition. Areas to consider include: an individual's purpose in life, value systems, influence of family and social environment, and making decisions. This unit is designed for sophomores, juniors, and/or seniors and is taught during the first nine weeks of the sequence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The following are general objectives for this unit. Teachers should write additional specific objectives that would meet the needs and abilities of their individual students.

Thematic objectives:

The student will

develop an understanding of each individual's importance and worth.

become more aware of the influences which shape personality.

explore the process of decision-making and understand how choices shape identity.

examine the effects of goals and dreams on an individual's identity.

Language arts objectives:

The student will

become acquainted and establish a trustful relationship with other members of the class.

participate in large and small groups and will encourage the participation of others.

identify the major point of view and supportive items in something heard.

identify the causes of communication breakdown.

experiment with words, phrases, and sentences in creative ways, and will reflect how these components are used to express creatively and effectively his/her thoughts.

develop confidence in his/her written and oral communication.

practice positive criticism by identifying the elements of good writing which appear in student papers.

identify the effects of the power of language in behavior, literature, media, and his/her own writing.

understand the effects of body language on behavior.

develop and express a personal response to literature.

identify character development and themes in literature.

MATERIALS:

Literature

A Separate Peace . . . . . John Knowles

Not Without Laughter . . . . . Langston Hughes

Selections from Spoon River Anthology . . . . . .Edgar Lee Masters

"I'm Nobody" . . . . . Emily Dickinson

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" . . . . . James Thurber

"The Short Happy Life of Francis McCombre" . . . . . Ernest Hemingway

"Molly Morgan" . . . . . .John Steinbeck

"I Am Cherry Alive" . . . . . Delmore Schwartz

"The Declaration of Independence" . . . . . Thomas Jefferson

"The Young Ones, Flip Side" . . . . . .James A. Emanuel

"Learn To Be Water" . . . . . .Morton Marcus

"Will I Remember? . . . . . Richard J. Margolis

"Thumbprint" . . . . . Eve Merriam

Film

"Replay" . . . . . Contemporary Films

"Up is Down" . . . . . .Pyramid Films

Music

"I Got a Name" . . . . . Jim Croce

"My Back Pages" . . . . . .Bob Dylan

"I Gotta Be Me" . . . . . Anthony Newley

"It Was a Very Good Year" . . . . . .Ervin Drake

ACTIVITIES:

To illustrate to the student and the teacher the need for discussion skills,[25] begin the first class session with the following statement: "For today's activity, I need three volunteers." In situations where students are already well-acquainted with one another the response may be spontaneous and you may receive many volunteers. This will, in fact, tell you the status of your group concerning the classroom climate. However, it may well be that no volunteers respond. This, too, tells you that specific steps need to be taken to build discussion effectiveness. In either case, discuss why students did or did not respond. Did they not know each other? Were they afraid of peer criticism? Did they not know or trust you, the teacher? These and similar questions will indicate the area(s) that need attention.

Write the names of famous personalities or characters on tags. Pin a name tag to the back of each student. Instruct students to seek their identities by asking each classmate no more than three questions which can be answered by a yes or no. While this is not a contest to see who is first or last, students may wish to sit down after learning their identities. Discuss the activity in terms of how it has helped break the ice. (1 day)

To help students learn each others' names, take them on a backpacking trip. With students in a circle, begin by having one student give his/her name and an item (the initial sound of which alliterates with the first name) that he/she wishes to take on the trip. Students, in turn, give their names and items for the trip and list the names of those students who have gone before, e.g., "My name is Joe Brown and I'm going on a backpacking trip. I plan to take jam." "My name is Sarah Jacobs, and I'm going on a backpacking trip with Joe and I am taking sandwiches." "My name is Mary Morse and I'm going on a backpacking trip with Joe and Sarah and I am taking matches."

The alliteration game can be used to reinforce the names just learned. Using a circle arrangement, have students introduce themselves by giving their first name preceded by an alliterative adjective, e.g., "My name is Happy Harriet." Continue the activity by having each student give the name, the alliterative adjective, and an alliterative verb of another student, e.g., "Happy Harriet hurries," or "Morbid Mary moans." Discuss how learning names has changed the classroom atmosphere. (1 day)

To learn the identities in the class, it is necessary to share more information than names. Instruct students to share three things they enjoy doing ending in -ing. Continue the activity until everyone has contributed and has become better acquainted.

Have students consider a character, an idea, or a concept in literature, films, or in real life past or present, that they have admired. Have students share these by contributing around the circle or by responding at random. Follow with a discussion of dislikes. (1 day)

To move students toward building trust by sharing their feelings and

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[25] Similar activities can be found in Gene and Barbara Stanford's book Learning Discussion Skills Through Games, Citation Press, New York, 1969, and Effective Discussion: A Handbook of Discussion Skills, John H. Bushman and Sandy Jones. D.O.K. Publishers, Inc., Buffalo, N.Y. 1977.

perceptions, have students write "I am" on a sheet of paper followed by 5 items that would accurately complete this statement as it applies to them at that moment. Students may voluntarily share these statements with the class or respond after being called upon by name by another student. Discuss the effect this activity has had on discovering identities and on the classroom atmosphere.

Instruct students to complete on paper or orally partial statements that are read to them. The following are statements that may be included in your list:

I like people who. . . . . .
It makes me sad when . . . . . .
Strangers make me feel . . . . . .
Other people regard me as . . . . . .

Discuss the responses to each of these on a voluntary basis. If students seem reluctant to discuss the last statement, discuss why. These statements reveal personal feelings, goals, and anxieties which can only be shared honestly as trust develops in a group. (1 day)

To discover the degree to which trust has been established in the class, have students prepare several continuums on paper on which to mark their positions on several statements. The continuum line should range from strongly agree on the extreme right to strongly disagree on the extreme left. Explain to the students that they will not be asked to share their responses. The statements should be slightly controversial and of interest to the students. Discuss any difficulty students felt in responding on the continuums.

Value voting provides students with an opportunity to share openly their positions on selected controversial statements of interest. Have the students respond to the statements in the following manner:

Strongly agree . . . . . wave hand
Agree . . . . . raise hand
Indifferent. . . . . fold arms
No response . . . . . fold hands
Disagree . . . . . thumb down
Strongly disagree. . . . . wave thumb down

Discuss the activity. Why were students motivated to respond in a certain way? Examine the reasons why students chose not to respond. Follow with a discussion of how values shape identity. (1 day)

Distribute paper bags to each student. Place magazines, crayons, glue, and scissors in a convenient location. Instruct students to think of the paper bags as themselves. On the outside they must glue pictures, headlines, phrases, or words cut from magazines which they feel describe how others see them. On the inside students should indicate how they see themselves. Have students share the bags with the class and explain some or all of their symbols. Discuss reasons behind the differences between the "inside" and "outside" of people. Evaluate the state of trust that has developed at this time. (1 day)

Have the class respond to the following question: "What can each of us do to make each other feel comfortable and free to respond in discussion?" Use the responses from this discussion as a guideline for interaction with this class for the remainder of the unit/year.

To further reveal identities have each student name an animal, a vegetable or fruit, and a city that is most like him/her and tell why, e.g., cocker spaniel—somewhat dependent, affectionate; onion—multi-layered, enhances other things; New Orleans—the past as well as the future is important. This activity asks students to share their own self-concepts which would be difficult without the establishment of trust. (1 day)

Using paper and crayons have each student create a symbol which represents him/her. Share symbols with the class and discuss their meanings. Symbols can be displayed in the classroom for the remainder of the unit. It might be interesting for students to consider their symbols at the end of the unit. What would they change? (1 day)

To create a responsibility to participate in group discussion, divide the class into groups of 5-7 each and select a controversial topic of interest for discussion. During the discussion each student must contribute at least once and at random. No student can participate twice until all have participated once. Discuss any frustration this structure caused. How might the interaction have occurred without the structure? This activity may be used to reinforce this skill as needed throughout the unit.

Place a large sheet of white butcher paper on a wall in the classroom to which students have easy access. Have students use it as a graffiti board on which they may write whatever they feel is an appropriate entry relating to the theme, an effective use of language, or an interesting insight. Students should be encouraged to write what they wish keeping in mind the responsibility for what one writes publicly and privately. Replace with new graffiti boards as necessary. (1 day)

To develop listening skills in group discussion involve students in the following activity. Put students in a discussion group of 5-7 and provide them with a topic of controversial interest to explore. During the discussion each student must follow this pattern after the first opinion is stated: 1) summarize the preceding person's statement, 2) state points which he/she agrees on, and 3) give his/her own opinion. Discuss the activity in relation to good discussion techniques and effective listening. This activity may be used to reinforce this skill as needed throughout the unit. (1 day)

Now that students have begun to examine their own identities and those of the others in class they are ready to begin an examination of the full concept of the theme. Have the class discuss what "identity" means to them. List their responses on the board. Have students select some concepts or feelings from this list that fit the abstraction format creating abstractions of their own. Examples: "Pride is a band-aid with stars on it." Share these with the class. Discuss any effective use of language. (1 day)

Have students read "The Declaration of Independence." How has this document shaped their identity and those of other Americans? To what extent do the doctrines expressed still hold true today? Have students imagine that their class is going to declare independence from the rest

of the school. Together have them list on the board those ideals they believe to be important for their "society" and write a "Declaration of Independence" which includes an ideal from each student in class. The final document must be passed by consensus before it can be considered complete. Discuss the interaction that occurred as the document was drafted. Were the skills the class has developed used effectively? Did everyone participate? How was consensus reached? (2 days)

The next four activities are warm-ups for pantomime. Have students stand in a circle in an open space in the classroom. The students are to walk in the circle concentrating on their responses to verbal stimuli given by the teacher. For example, while students are moving around the circle the teacher says: "Imagine that you are barefoot on a hot sunny day; you are walking on a hot gritty sidewalk; finally, you are able to step off into some cool, soft grass." The students respond to the stimulus as if the situation were real. When students seem relaxed and comfortable in responding, have them stand facing in the center of the circle. Everyone at the same time must respond to more verbal stimuli. The teacher may have them pretend to lift objects of different weights, toss balls of different sizes and weights, or pass objects or animals around the circle. Each of these activities requires the students to respond to stimuli, to concentrate on imaginary objects, and to become comfortable with expressing feelings and actions physically.

While students are in the circle, have them join hands. Starting with one person, pass a "hand squeeze" around the circle as quickly as possible until it reaches the starting point. Time the group and encourage the students to try to beat the time with several attempts. This activity brings the group together in physical contact in a nonthreatening way which helps students overcome inhibitions about participating in creative dramatics with others in the class.

Place students in pairs (if there is an odd number, the teacher should become involved). While facing each other have students place their palms against those of their partner. They should stand far enough from their partner so that when each pushes against the palms of the other, he/she must rely on the partner to support him/her. The pairs move in a see-saw motion, pushing forward and supporting backward until a comfortable balance has been reached. Moving closer to pantomime, have the partners hold their palms to within an inch of their partner's palm repeating the see-saw motion without touching. This is merely a simulation of the motion they just completed, but the efforts of push and support should appear the same.

As a final warm-up to prepare for pantomime, have partners practice mirroring the actions of each other. For one minute have one partner initiate the action while the other imitates the action as if he/she were a mirror image. Then reverse roles for one minute. Discuss how the warm-up activities have helped students to relax and feel less inhibited. (2 days)

To practice using pantomime, have students stand in a circle facing center. Using some of the feelings and concepts that came from the abstractions on identity, have students practice facial expressions of those feelings (confusion, crisis, loneliness, etc.) Follow with having one student at a time randomly step into the center and pose in response to those feelings. Example: Teacher says: "Fear." Student steps into the circle; places hands in front of face, and cowers away from an imagined danger. (1 day)

Place students in a circle facing center. Explain to them that as a poem is read aloud, they should step into the circle one at a time in a pose they feel represents their interpretation of the poem. The first person to step into the circle should freeze the pose. The next person to pose must be joined by contact to the person in the circle freezing his/her pose. The poem is repeated as many times as necessary until 5-7 people have entered the circle to form a "monument." While the monument holds its pose, those observing should discuss what they see and how their interpretations may differ. For this activity read the following poems: "The Young Ones, Flip Side," "I Am Cherry Alive," "Learn to Be Water." Follow this activity with a discussion which might include, but not be limited to, the following: What do each of these poems say about Identity? Compare and contrast Marcus' poem with Emmanuel's. In what ways can you identify with feelings expressed in these poems? (2 days)

To examine how loudly our silent language can speak, have students begin by doing some warm up activities for pantomime. After students are in a circle, have one student at random come into the center of the circle pantomiming a "self" that they have felt in certain situations. The other students should try to guess what emotions and situations surround the pantomimes. After everyone has had a chance to share, discuss the power of non-verbal communication. What examples can be given to demonstrate situations in which the verbal language contradicts the non-verbal. Students may wish to pantomime these examples. (1 day)

Show the film "Up Is Down." Have students write for 3 to 5 minutes in response to the film. Read the writings in groups and share positive responses to the writing looking for effective word choice. Bring the groups back together for a discussion of the film and their response to it. Why did the boy choose to remain upside down? How do you feel about his decision? What experiences have you had which placed you in a parallel situation? What is this film saying about self-discovery? Play the song "I Gotta Be Me." Relate the song to the film and student responses. Discuss the music and its effectiveness in conveying the message. Which is more effective and why? (2 days)

Have students read the poem "Will I Remember?" After students have shared their emotional responses to the poem, have them write from 3 to 5 minutes listing people, places, and experiences they want to remember from their childhood. Share and discuss the writing in groups being careful to comment positively on especially effective use of language. Bring the class together and discuss how they selected these items to be preserved. Ask students to consider how the items listed have shaped their identities. Students may volunteer responses. (2 days)

Show the film "Replay." Discuss student response. In what ways did the film depict a "generation gap?" "generation bridge?" Follow the discussion with a preparation of a "generations" poster. Have students select pictures from magazines which show each side of the "gap" or "bridge." Have students share and explain how their posters relate to the Identity theme. (2 days)

Using washable ink or tempera paint have students make thumbprints on a sheet of paper. Students should make a list of words which describe their thumbprints. Share and discuss the list of words. Read "I'm Nobody" and "Thumbprint." Consider the following in discussion: When can being nobody mean being somebody? When is the reverse true? When would you rather be nobody? somebody? How does Dickinson make being "somebody" seem unattractive? Compare and contrast Dickinson's and Merriam's philosophies of being. How does Merriam create the mental image of a thumbprint? Does she use any of the words that you listed for your print? The thumbprint identifies but is it identity? Explain. Play the song "I Got a Name." Compare Croce's message with those of Dickinson and Merriam. How are names and thumbprints similar? different? How does the music enhance the message? (3 days)

Read selections from Spoon River Anthology. Discuss responses to the epitaphs. What do these epitaphs reveal about these people? What messages do you think these people were trying to convey to the living? Have students write their own epitaphs keeping in mind how they would like to be remembered and how they think they will be remembered. Share and explain the epitaphs. (2 days)

Listen to "My Back Pages" and "It Was a Very Good Year." Discuss responses considering how these compare with Masters' epitaphs. What kind of person is revealed in each of these songs? How do these songs reflect the growth of an identity? Compare and contrast the musical styles. With which of these can you most identify? Explain the analogy between a person's life and a bottle of wine. Consider the commercial phrase "You're not getting older; you're getting better." How do you feel about that philosophy? To what extent can this philosophy be applied to the songs? (1 day)

Stereotyping can destroy identity. Discuss briefly some stereotypes that are familiar "identity strippers." Clip an article, ~~and add~~ a headline or picture which is an example of stereotyping. Create an identity for the person stereotyped in your clipping. Share the clipping and the new identities. Do the created identities contain stereotyped information? (2 days)

Have students read "The Short Happy Life of Francis McCombre" and "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." Discuss student responses to the stories considering the following: What is the significance of the title of Hemingway's story? How would you characterize Mrs. McCombre? her husband? Was the shot that killed Francis McCombre intentional? What is the theme of the story? How do you explain a man who allows his identity to be crushed under the weight of someone else's? Compare and contrast Walter Mitty and Francis McCombre. their wives. Walter Mitty bounces back and forth between fantasy and reality to survive. Which is the real Walter Mitty? How does Thurber portray the fantasy world? Which was the real Francis McCombre? Which way of life would be more preferable to you? (1 day)

Have students read A Separate Peace. To examine the characters of Phineas and Gene, have students make a list of physical, mental, and emotional characteristics of these two boys. Dividing the class into groups of 5-7, have students compare lists and compile a group list for each character based on a group discussion of the characteristics. Compare and contrast the characterizations of each group. Account for the differences—what occurs in the lives of each of these boys to change or

shape their identities? In what ways has your identity grown or changed?

The narrator in A Separate Peace returns to the school to find things very different from what he had remembered. Ask students to consider a similar experience in their own lives when they visited the scene of a childhood memory and found it to be different. How have their feelings changed? Why is the setting different? Discuss why "You can never go home again." How do values change with maturity? Compare these experiences with those of the characters in the novel. (4 days)

Have students read Not Without Laughter. Family relationships play an important part in shaping the identities of several characters in this novel. Divide into groups and select a character whose "self" was shaped by family influence. Discuss how the family influenced this character. Examine the values and priorities of this character. Which are original and which seem "borrowed" from others? How has your family influenced your priorities and values? What other forces in society have helped form your identity? Are these forces at work on your character from the novel? Have students return to the class and share their findings. Be sure that responses to this activity are thorough. (3 days)

Read "Molly Morgan." Compare and contrast Molly with Sandy in Not Without Laughter. Molly reaches a crisis point when faced with the opportunity to discover if her image of her father is fact or fantasy. She chooses to live with her family. Consider times when beliefs you held were revealed to you as fantasy. Brainstorm on childhood fantasies either universal or personal that are usually revealed as imaginary through the maturation process. Write briefly about your feelings as you try to capture them at the point when your fantasy was exposed. Share and discuss the writing. (2 days)

Provide sheets of white butcher paper, magazines, scissors, glue, and crayons for Self Shadows, the culminating activity for this unit. Instruct students to lie on the butcher paper spread on the floor. Have another student draw around the person lying down to form an outline of that person. Have students cut out their shadows and slip and glue pictures and words or draw figures, words, and phrases which reflect or represent the philosophies of writers and characters in the works studied that parallel their own self-concepts. Share and discuss the Self Shadows. (2 days)

THEME: Brotherhood

TITLE: "No Man Is An Island"

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL:

Students will consider the area of Brotherhood as it has been expressed through literature, film, and music. Concurrently, students will respond to this theme through oral and written composition. Areas to consider include race relations, establishment vs. revolution, young vs. old, and war vs. peace. This course is designed for sophomores, juniors, and/or seniors, and is taught during the 2nd 9 weeks of the sequence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The following are general objectives for this unit. Teachers should write additional specific objectives that would meet the needs and abilities of their individual students.

Thematic objectives:

The student will

demonstrate an understanding of the thematic unit concept.

recognize evidence of man's inhumanity toward man.

investigate value systems found in selections studied and compare and contrast these systems with his/her own.

define the term brotherhood as it relates to him/her from appropriate materials and activities in this unit.

Language arts objectives:

The student will

identify the major point of view and supportive items in something heard.

participate in casual conversation, balancing his contributions in proportion to those of the others involved.

participate in discussion leading toward a goal or solution.

point out the "universal" in literature by identifying his/her own or someone else's encounter with it.

demonstrate an understanding of literature which is varied in form but related in content and will demonstrate an understanding of the different effects each has on the reader.

experiment with several alternative ways of expressing his/her idea in writing and select the one which is closest to his/her intent.

revise, edit, and proofread his/her own writing to make it clear and effective for the reader.

describe the power of language found in various forms of communication.

identify causes of communication breakdown.

use appropriate usage and structure in his/her writing and speaking consistent with the message, audience, and occasion.

identify the dialects used by authors in this unit, understand the dialectal variation (geographic and social) found in the English language and understand the concept of linguistic variation in language.

MATERIALS:

Literature

Parable of the Good Samaritan . . . . . Luke 10:25-37, Holy Bible

"Ballad of East and West". . . . . Rudyard Kipling

"Mending Wall" . . . . . .Robert Frost

Brian's Song . . . . . William Blinn

"Mary McNeeley" . . . . . .Edgar Lee Masters

"Daniel M'Cumber" . . . . . .Edgar Lee Masters

"The Room" . . . . . .James Baldwin

"The Hangman" . . . . . .Maurice Ogden

Where the Lilies Bloom . . . . . .Vera and Bill Cleaver

"The Sniper" . . . . . Liam O'Flaherty

A Man for All Seasons . . . . . .Robert Bolt

To Kill a Mockingbird. . . . . .Harper Lee

Meditation XVII . . . . . John Donne

Division Street: America . . . . . .Studs Terkel

The Me Nobody Knows . . . . . Stephen Joseph

Film

" The Parable". . . . . World Council of Churches

" The Hangman". . . . . Contemporary Films

" Coal Mines of Appalacia" . . . . . .National Geographic Society

" No Man Is an Island" . . . . . .Dana Productions

Music

"He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother" Neil Diamond

"You'll Never Walk Alone" . . . . . Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein

"Bridge Over Troubled Waters" Paul Simon and Art Garfunkle

"Get By With a Little Help from My Friends" . . .John Lennon and Paul McCartney

"West Side Story" . . . . . Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim

"You've Got a Friend". . . . . Carole King

ACTIVITIES:

To introduce this unit on brotherhood--No Man Is an Island--have students brainstorm the question "What is Brotherhood?". Students should discuss why they feel there is/is not a need for a "brother." Some consideration should be given to protection, comfort, confidence, love, and friendship. To motivate students to think of possible kinds of brotherhood, have them listen to songs which shed light on this theme. (see MATERIALS section) (1 day)

Using the music as stimulus, have students write freely about their concepts of brotherhood. This activity becomes much more meaningful if the students choose something in which they are personally involved. Writing should be shared and constructively criticized in small groups. Have students group the many examples of brotherhood found in the papers into general headings so that they may be discussed more easily. Guide the discussion to arrive at the concept that brotherhood is as old as mankind. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan to students. Discuss its importance, significance. Discuss the parable form of literature. How is it used? Why? What effect does it have? What is Christ saying? Do the students agree? Why? Why not? (2 days)

To help students to question, elaborate and qualify their ideas in discussions, to help students to move beyond the surface level and delve more deeply into the topic under discussion, have them do the following activity:

Divide the class into groups of 6. Give each group a topic to discuss, then give each student within each group a list of statements/questions which (s)he can use to participate in one of the six processes: elaboration, clarification, comparison, contrast, justification, and evaluation. Students should incorporate at random the statements/questions into the discussion at appropriate times.

Sample statements/questions for the six categories:

Elaboration: "Could you go into that a little further?"
"I would expand on that idea by saying..."

Clarification: "What exactly do you mean?"
"Do I understand you to mean...?"

Comparison: "That is an interesting statement. How does that compare with what was previously said?"
"I would compare that to..."

Contrast: "In contrast to your statement, I think..."
"I see that idea as different from his/hers in this way..."

Justification: "How would you defend that statement against...?"
"What assumptions are you basing that on?"

Evaluation: "My reaction to that idea is..."
"What do you think of that idea?"

(1 day)

"The Ballad of East and West" is also concerned with brotherhood theme. The main consideration in this activity is to have students become acquainted with Kipling's writing and to understand his particular point of view toward the brotherhood theme. Have students also read Frost's "Mending Wall." Compare and contrast these two poems as to content and the style of the authors. Include, too, the "Parable of the Good Samaritan." In today's world does the principle of the Good Samaritan work any longer? Does Frost have a better solution? The discussion should center around the philosophy in each selection, the techniques that each author uses in conveying that philosophy, and how effective each author is for the students. Pay close attention to the discussion techniques of the students. Did they implement the processes (elaboration, contrast, etc.) suggested in the previous activity? (1 day)

Have students read "The Sniper." Discuss what happens in the story. What does it say about the enemy? How can they relate the theme "No Man Is an Island" to the story? The story ends with the sniper turning over the body of his victim only to discover it is his brother. Have the students continue the story by relating how the sniper felt when he looked into the face of his brother, what he did immediately after this incident, or how this incident changed his attitude toward war. The students could also write the brother's version of the story prior to his death. Share the writing with the class. (2 days)

Have students discuss Brian's Song. Some general questions to include: What kind of person is Gale Sayers? How do we know? Was Sayers' ego inflated? How can we tell ? Could we characterize Sayers as a typical "jock" who is proud of his muscle? What was Sayers' relationship to Brian Piccolo? How did Brian's strength change Gale? How does this book fit into the brotherhood theme? Is the concept of "No Man Is An Island" the same as the philosophy of Brian's Song? (2 days)

In addition to the warm-up activities suggested in the Identity unit (p. 30), the following warm-ups should be included prior to the role-playing activity. Place students in pairs (if there is an odd number, the teacher should become involved). While facing each other, students participate in verbal warm-ups. First, have students work with word associations. Alternatively, students, using single words, associate ideas back and forth.

The second activity is similar. Again in pairs, students create a sentence one word at a time with each partner alternating. Next, have students create a weather forecast one word at a time. Broaden the activity to whole sentences. Have each pair create a news report using sentences from first one partner then the other.

Using a casual informal format, have four students role-play the main characters in Brian's Song by having them enter into a conversation with each other. After this activity, the rest of the class may suggest topics to these characters (based on the material in the book) concerning their ideas about brotherhood. (2 days)

Using the "happiness is a warm puppy" format, have students write as many statements indicating what brotherhood now means to them after having read the Parable of the Good Samaritan, "Ballad of East and West," "Mending Wall," and Brian's Song. Brotherhood is _____. (1 day)

View the film "No Man Is an Island." Have students respond in writing. Share the writing with the class. Discuss the responses. Move to a discussion of what kinds of things were actually happening in the film. What groups of people are shown in this film? How does this film communicate the ideas of Donne's poem? Have students read and discuss the written form, focusing on its pertinence to their own lives. View the film a second time looking for techniques of film-making which are particularly effective or possibly weakening. Ask the students if they prefer the visual interpretation or the actual piece of literature. Why? Where facilities permit, students may wish to develop their own slide show entitled "No Man Is an Island." (2 days)

To continue the theme found in the phrase "No Man Is an Island," have students listen to a recording of West Side Story. Emphasize two areas concerning this recording: how the material relates to the brotherhood theme--that all men are oppressed in some way, whether they be Black, Puerto Rican, Indian--and the mode of presentation. How effective is the music? As effective as reading the printed score? (2 days)

Have students react to the music of West Side Story by writing a personal response. Use the music as a stimulus to writing, i.e., students should have the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways. For those who need a little push, you might suggest the question "Do you have to be white to be 'Free in America?'" Share writing in groups. Guide the students in their writing groups. Have them look for specific examples of writing quality: clarity, and conciseness of expression, effective word choice, good imagery, honest thoughtful expression, the reader's presence in the writing, metaphoric descriptive passages. (2 days)

View and discuss the film "The Hangman." Who is the "hangman?" What groups of people are included in the film? Read the poem by Maurice Ogden. How does the poem relate to the students? What are some examples of "not getting involved" which particularly anger them? Have they been guilty of this? What are some reasons people give for acting this way? Are they justified? View the film again looking for specific techniques which are effective or weak. Do the students prefer the visual presentation or the poem? Why? (2 days)

Have the students test themselves on how they make inferences in stereotyping. On the board or on a handout sheet, begin a list of all the different groups of people the class can think of. The teacher may wish to start things by beginning the list with some obvious ones such as American Indian, Black American, Mexican American, White Anglo-Saxon, Oriental, etc. Additions which may not be so obvious are Jocks, Teachers, Politicians, Southerners, Catholics, Farmers, etc. Have the students list words that describe their idea of a typical person in this group. Students should include in this list language patterns (words and phrases) that may be representative of the groups. Share these with the class. Begin a discussion of stereotyping, inferences, and prejudice. To what extent do we allow geographic and social dialects to affect our relationships with other people? Follow this discussion with an assignment asking students to find verbal or pictorial examples of stereotyping, inferences, or prejudice in magazines, newspapers, or other available sources. Share these with the class. (2 days)

Have students read selections from Division Street: America. Discuss the segments about Jan Powers, Frankie Rodriguez, Bill Lahr, Charlie Landesfahr, Lew Gibson, Ed Criado, and Bill Dellakamp. General questions to consider include: How are these people like or different from us? How can we tell? What kinds of students do you think these people are or were? In groups, have students write a word portrait about one of the people found in the selections. The portrait should include a physical description, his/her philosophy, likes and dislikes, etc. Discuss how the language used by these people helped to create this picture. (2 days)

Divide class into two groups for study of two poems and a short story. Have half the class read "Mary McNeely" and Daniel M'Cumber" by Masters; the other half should read Baldwin's "The Room" In this activity, the students are studying different types of literature with the same basic theme. Have the students in groups discuss the content of each selection, style of authors, theme relationship, genre, and its way of presenting the theme; then have each group relate its findings to the other group through a general class discussion. (1 day)

Show the film "The Parable" as stimulus for writing. After the viewing, have students respond. Hopefully, something in the film will spark an imaginative, creative thought for the student. (An optional approach is to have a brief discussion after the film and before the writing.) Share and constructively criticize papers in groups, again looking for qualities of good writing. (2 days)

Have students read "The Hopeless Tree" from The Me Nobody Knows. Discuss what possible meanings this tale could have. Have the students ever received something after waiting for it almost to the point of hopelessness? Were they satisfied when they finally did receive it? What meanings could Curtis have had in mind when he wrote it? How is this story related to the theme "No Man Is an Island?" Even though Curtis did not add a moral to the end of his story, it is similar to the fable style of storytelling. What possible morals could be added to "The Hopeless Tree?" As a writing activity students could relate a personal experience similar to the one discussed in this story. Writing should be shared in class. (2 days)

Open general class discussion with a sharing of conflicts that many young people face today—students' beliefs vs. the beliefs of their parents, of their government, of school officials. Discussion might also include reactions concerning draft dodgers, the question of amnesty, and the conscientious objector. Have students consider just where their duty would lie if there were a conflict in these areas—to their own beliefs? to their government? to God? The point of this activity is to introduce the study of one man's conflict and how it was resolved. Students should begin reading A Man for All Seasons in class. (2 days)

Have students discuss the play A Man for All Seasons specifically inquiring about the general theme, the specific relationship of God and country, the content, and the dramatic mode. Students should concentrate on the play as an art form and then should compare it to the other forms—poem, parable, short story—that have been previously read. (3 days)

Have students select from their writing folder one paper that they want to revise. Remind them of the many good writing characteristics that have been discussed in class and that they should keep in mind two or three (you may want to select these) items to consider when they make the revision. (1 day)

Have students read Where the Lilies Bloom or view the movie "The Coal Mines of Appalachia." Discuss the generalizations that are often made of the poor. Then give the students the following situation: "You have been given $4,000.00 (or the government's definition of the poverty level). You must plan a year's budget for a family of six. You are to use a newspaper and catalogues to discover the cost of housing, groceries, clothing, etc. After students have reported their budget, have them give their reactions to the class (through written response or class discussion or both). The response could include their feelings about life that is lived in this way, their responsibility concerning the plight of the poor, and what, if any, changes they have made concerning their relationship to the poor. (3 days)

Discuss the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. Again emphasize the student's personal response to the book. How does the content affect the student? How do they feel about the apparent discrimination presented by Lee? How does this relate to the present day philosophy? Practice? Are the students prejudiced? How? What will they do about it? Is their prejudice just concerned with race? What other kinds of discrimination affect them? Have students secure a general understanding of the content (specifics) of the novel. Don't have them emphasize the who, what, when, and how as entities in themselves, but rather how they interact so that inferences and significances can be drawn from the material. Discuss the trial and the implications it had on Scout. Was Scout able to relate to the minority in the book? Can the reader relate in the same way? Another way? How? How effective was Lee in presenting the problem of race relations? Discuss character presentations. How does each affect the reader? Is Lee's story believable? Why? Study the language variations found in the work. (4 days)

Set up a mock trial using the students as the principal characters (witnesses), judge, and the jury. Have each student as a principal character sit in the witness chair and tell the court (class) what his interpretation of the crime is. The judge and, in this trial, the jury may ask the witnesses questions. They should respond as characters in the story based on what the novel tells them. Role-playing and improvisational situations may be set up which would foster more of this creative, imaginative interpretation of the novel. Precede the activity with sufficient warm-ups similar to those suggested on pages 30 and 37. (2 days)

Synthesize the material in this unit by having each student respond to the statement "No Man Is an Island." By reading various kinds of literature, by seeing films, by listening to music, and by talking to their peers, students should now have some evidence as to the effect this unit has had on their own thinking concerning the theme of brotherhood. (1 day)

THEME: Heroism

TITLE: "Heroes and She-roes"

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL:

Students will examine the hero/heroine concept as it is found in literature, film, and music. In addition students will respond to this theme through oral and written composition. Primarily, the students will investigate the characteristics of heroes and heroines and explore what makes particular actions heroic. The course is designed for sophomores, juniors, and/or seniors and is taught during the third nine weeks of the sequence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The following are general objectives for this unit. Teachers should write additional specific objectives that would meet the needs and abilities of their individual students.

Thematic objectives:

The student will

demonstrate an understanding of the thematic unit concept.

examine the concept of heroism.

investigate the influence of the hero figure in society.

confront the pecularities of social and cultural life in America and their relationship to the hero.

understand heroic characteristics found in a particular period of time and relate these characteristics to heroes found in other time periods.

Language arts objectives:

The student will

develop confidence in his/her written and oral composition.

experiment with several alternative ways of expressing his/her idea in writing and select the one which is closest to his/her intent.

revise, edit, and proofread his/her own writing to make it clear and effective for the reader.

examine qualities of writing in others/ writing as well as his/her own.

identify language items or elements from selected literature which will demonstrate language change and variety.

participate in discussion leading toward a goal or solution.

describe the power of language found in various forms of communication.

present to a group an informational report that is clear and cohesive.

identify major traits of important fictional characters and analyze their influence on each other.

classify literary selections according to the genre and mood.

identify figures of speech in literature and film specifically examining metaphor, irony, and personification.

MATERIALS:

Literature

Huckleberry Finn. . . . . .Mark Twain

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter . . . . . Carson McCullers

Profiles in Courage . . . . . .John F. Kennedy

Freedom Train . . . . . Dorothy Sterling

Little Big Man . . . . . Thomas Berger

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight . . . . . Anonymous

Super Hero Comics (Superman, Wonder Woman, etc.)

"I sing of Olaf glad and big" . . . . . .e. e. cummings

"Anthem for Doomed Youth" . . . . . .Wilfred Owen

"Tom Quartz, The Cat" . . . . . .Mark Twain

"Buck Fanshaw's Funeral". . . . . .Mark Twain

"The Old Demon" . . . . . .Pearl Buck

"The Railroad Blasting" . . . . . .Ernest Ingersoll

"Jesse James" . . . . . William Rose Benét

"Slade" (Chapter X, Roughing It) . . . . . Mark Twain

Film

"The Clown". . . . . Pyramid Films

"Blaze Glory". . . . . Pyramid Films

"The Legend of the Lone Ranger". . . . . Roa's Films

Music

"Bye, Bye Miss American Pie" . . . . . .Don McClean

"Big, Bad John" . . . . . .Jimmy Dean

"Rocky Raccoon" . . . . . John Lennon and Paul McCartney

"C'est Moi" . . . . . Alan J. Lerner

ACTIVITIES:

To begin the unit "Heroes and She-roes, have students brainstorm on the word "Heroism." Place responses on the chalkboard. Also ask a student to record all responses so that they may be used later in the unit. Responses can be based on many sources: the students' perceptions of heroes/heroines, specific characteristics that they feel are important to have in order to be a hero, qualities that they see in "real-life" heroes, examples of acts that they consider heroic. After brainstorming, discuss the responses and suggest that students may add to and delete from the list as they read and discuss throughout the unit. (1 day)

Have students bring to class a variety of Super Hero comic books as well as titles and descriptions of super hero television shows (Saturday morning variety). Compare and contrast the treatment of the super hero by both media. Is one more effective? How is that effectiveness achieved? Discuss the comic book style of communication as well as the TV presentation. Does the medium influence the attitude we have toward the hero? Discussion

of the super hero should include: qualities that make heroes, types of characters, superhuman powers, anonymous nature, the nature of the "evil" he/she confronts. (2 days)

Have students choose one quality that they have found to be characteristic of a hero and write a story in which they emphasize that quality. The writing may be fictional or a telling of an incident from their childhood. Review with them qualities of good writing. The writing should then be shared in small groups with positive/constructive criticism offered to each writer from their peers. (2 days)

Have students read and discuss Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Due to language difficulty a modern translation may be in order; however, students should be exposed to some portion of the original Middle English version so that they may experience the language of the time. Share with the students some background information concerning King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable. Then discuss the content of the poem (story) emphasizing the heroic qualities of Sir Gawain. Can one be a hero by not doing something? Have students list the qualities that they see in Sir Gawain. Do the bizarre happenings in the tale detract from the author's message? Have students discuss why they think writers use unreal elements in telling their tales. How does this tale compare to the super heroes found in the comic books or on Saturday morning TV? Provide necessary information concerning the 3 major historical divisions in the English language and give some description of the Middle English language. Have students investigate the M. E. language characteristics found in Sir Gawain and have them compare this language to Modern English. (4 days)

Using the "unreal element" as found in Sir Gawain and the super hero comic book, have students compose a story in which they use this imaginary element to make a point. Share and discuss the writing in small groups. Negative as well as positive criticism should be incorporated into the discussion at this time. (2 days)

Have students read Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and cummings' "I sing of Olaf glad and big." Have them compare and contrast the two poems as to the content and style of the authors. Students should examine closely the mood and how Owen in particular developed it. In addition, cummings' use of language to create effective images offers material for study. Discuss the heroic qualities in both works. Is it as easy to know the heroism in "Anthem" as in "Olaf?" What are the apparent attitudes of Owen and cummings toward bravery and heroism in war? Remind students (if needed) of effective discussion techniques. (1 day)

Following the discussion of "Anthem" and "Olaf," have students respond in a personal way to the poems through a pictorial or verbal collage. Stress the importance of organization, relationships, and intent in collage preparation. (1 day)

"The Old Demon" explores the fearless or heroic approach to death. Have students examine this heroism. Some points to consider: According to Pearl Buck, what does it take for a person to be heroic? How are these qualities different from those of a daredevil? To what extent is Mrs. Wang

a heroine? How does Buck create this heroic image in her character? In addition, discuss Buck's attitude toward war and dying. How is it similar/dissimilar to Owen's and cummings' attitudes? What does the use of humor do to make the story more/less effective for the reader?

To complete the study of "The Old Demon," have students respond in writing to the following question: Who in today's society do you see as having heroic qualities similar to those found in Buck's short story? Share and discuss in small groups offering positive and negative criticism of the writing. (3 days)

View and discuss the film "The Clown." How does the idea of self-sacrifice presented in the film relate to heroism? To what extent is the point of view in the film similar to that expressed in "The Old Demon?" Discuss the effectiveness of the film as an art form. Which medium (film or print) has more effect on the student? Why? Have students discuss the filmaker and author as artist. (1 day)

Have students select from their writing folder a paper they want to revise. Remind them of the many good writing characteristics that have been discussed in class. Students should keep in mind one or two general writing techniques (you may want to select them) as well as the specific items considered in small groups. (2 days)

For a change of pace, have students listen to selected music and discuss the heroic qualities presented by that form. Students may wish to bring into class their own music which they feel presents particular heroic qualities. Some suggestions are offered in the MATERIALS section of this unit. (1 day)

Newspapers and magazines are good sources for students to find examples of heroic deeds. Have them collect and share examples of people in the news/sports that exemplify the qualities of heroism that have been discussed in class. They may wish to compare their "heroes" with those presented by Sir Gawain, Pearl Buck, cummings, and others discussed in class. In addition, discuss with your students the newspaper and magazine form of communication. How are they different from each other? from TV? Film? What language forms/devices are used to present these "heroes" to the public? Discuss some of the propaganda devices and advertising claims and examine how these are used to create a hero figure. (3 days)

After doing a sufficient number of creative drama warm-ups (see pages 30 and 37), students enter into a "Liar's Contest." Have them work in pairs. Each is to take turns telling an imaginary story in which they include the most outrageous characters, fabulous events, impossible situations, and unbelievable endings. As the students are telling their tall tales to each other, randomly select a pair to tell a portion of their tale to the entire class. Continue this process until all have shared.

This activity serves as an introduction to reading two of Twain's stories: "Tom Quartz, the Cat" and "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral." Include in the discussion of these two works: a comparison of the heroic qualities found in the tales of Twain with those of the students, the use of humor in telling a story, Twain's ability to describe his characters, and the "universal elements" found in Twain's writing.

Mark Twain was particularly adept at capturing the local flavor of an area and his writing reflects what he actually heard. The stories reflect the incredible varieties of the English language. Be sure students understand the terms "language" and "dialects." Select individuals to gather and present information about major dialect areas in the U.S. Have your class examine Twain's writing for specific dialect usage. (4 days)

Additional dialect study can occur while discussing Ingersoll's "The Railroad Blasting." In addition to the dialect study, have students examine the qualities of this type of hero. Too, students should compare the writing of Ingersoll to Twain's. (1 day)

Have students return to the tall tales they shared orally before reading Twain and Ingersoll. Now suggest that they write a lengthy tall tale incorporating what they have learned from the reading and discussion. Emphasis is placed on effective use of language. Writing should be shared and constructively criticized in small groups. One piece of writing should be chosen from each group to be presented to the total class for critical response. (2 days)

To introduce the western hero, show the film "The Legend of the Lone Ranger." Discussion areas to include: Does this hero have qualities other heroes in the unit do not have? How can the western hero be characterized? Have the forces of evil changed? To what extent does the Lone Ranger have more personal qualities than the other heroes discussed in class? Again, compare and contrast the film as a medium to convey heroic qualities to other forms--the short story, poem, or even the comic book. (1 day)

Benét's "Jesse James" seems to have conflicting heroic characteristics: romance, superhuman qualities, and, of course, the outlaw image. Discuss with students Benét's attitude toward Jesse James. Is it possible for an outlaw to be a hero? The theme of robbing the rich and giving to the poor goes back to Robin Hood. Has time affected our belief on this matter? Have students evaluate this form of literature. How effective is it for them? Again, students should discuss effective use of language and dialects. (1 day)

To introduce "Slade," have a group of students improvise the following situation:

> The student council has decided that since it has no money available to hire a popular disc jockey for the upcoming Recognition Ball, it must secure the money by having each student give up his/her lunch money for 3 days. It is imperative that every student in school participate in order to reach this goal. The officers are now meeting to decide the ways in which they must enlist and enforce participation.

Discuss the improvisation including the following points: What techniques were suggested? Was this method of fund-raising a realistic solution? To what extent were individual student rights considered? How would you feel as a student in this school? Can the end ever justify the means?

Have students read and discuss "Slade." Include in the discussion the "hero" qualities of Slade. Are they different from Jesse James? How? Did the times in which Slade lived require people like Slade to become judge, jury, and executioner? Why or why not? Is there any situation

today in which students would sanction such actions? How is Slade's approach different from/similar to the approaches of the Lone Ranger? James? the super heroes? students in improvisation? Is one more effective than the other? After reading and discussing this story, have students respond in writing to the premise that "excess power may corrupt." Share and discuss writing in class. (3 days)

Have students select a second paper they wish to revise. Again, they should evaluate readers' comments about their papers and revise accordingly. You should select one or two writing problems that many students are having to emphasize in this revision. (2 days)

Show and discuss the film "Blaze Glory." What qualities of heroism are emphasized? To what extent does this emphasis affect the response to the film? Explore the concept of satire with students and use the film as an illustration. Have students find other examples of satire and irony in other selections read in the unit. (2 days)

Return to the list of heroic qualities prepared in the brainstorming session at the beginning of the unit. Have students evaluate their list of qualities in terms of the qualities found in readings and discussions in the unit. Did they find all the qualities on the list in the reading? What qualities that they feel are important were not found? (1 day)

For the remaining time in this unit, have students present individual and/or group projects. Earlier in the course share information (content and difficulty) about 5 major works related to this theme and have students group themselves around one of these works. The works suggested are Huckleberry Finn, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Profiles in Courage, Freedom Train, and Little Big Man. After reading and studying the work, each group or individuals within each group make presentations to the rest of the class. These presentations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

A brief personal response to the work: how they felt about it, what it made them think about, did they like it or not and why? In addition, this response may be represented visually: a word or pictorial collage, a slide presentation, etc.

A brief overview of the plot, setting, description of characters and their development.

How this work parallels other works studied in the unit. Compare and contrast the presentation of the hero/heroine and his/her qualities.

The effectiveness of form and style chosen by author as well as other devices used to create a believable heroic experience.

Other more project-oriented presentations include:

A "Meet the Press" interview. Panel members respond to questions from the class as would the characters in their particular work.

A journal. Students choose their contemporary hero/heroine from TV,

movies, athletics, politics, etc., and report in their journals what they believe are heroic actions taken by their heroes/heroines. Students should give their responses to these actions and how they relate to the heroes/heroines studied in their reading.

A conversation. Students take on the identities of selected characters in the work and discuss such topics as (1) being a hero vs. being a daredevil, (2) incidents which demand personal heroism, (3) are heroes born or made, and (4) exploitation of heroic acts. (5 days)

THEME: Women

TITLE: "Women: Roles and Goals"

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL:

Students will examine the roles of women, the attitudes and philosophies of certain women, and the ideals and goals which women strive to achieve in our society as revealed through literature, film, media, art, and music. In addition, students will respond to this theme through oral and written composition. Students will be concerned with defining roles of women, examining the relationships of women to men, other women, and themselves, familiarizing themselves with famous women who have influenced these roles and relationships. They will consider the impact these areas have had or will have on their own development as women or men. This course is designed for sophomores, juniors, and/or seniors and is taught during the 4th nine weeks of the sequence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The following are general objectives for this unit. Teachers should write additional specific objectives that would meet the needs and abilities of their individual students.

Thematic objectives:

The student will

demonstrate an understanding of the thematic unit concept.

examine the total concept of what it means to be a woman in our society.

investigate the influence of women in history on the concepts of womanhood.

define roles that have become stereotypically female.

consider the forces in society which shape "female" behavior.

Language arts objectives:

The student will

develop confidence in his/her oral and written composition.

focus on specific forms of structured written expression.

revise, edit, and proofread his/her own writing to make it effective and clear for the reader.

examine qualities of writing in others' writing as well as his/her own.

identify and examine the effects of language which shapes behavior.

participate in discussion which asks him/her to elaborate, justify, clarify, compare, contrast, and evaluate.

present to the group an informational report that is clear and cohesive.

identify major traits of important fictional characters and analyze their influence on each other.

examine the effectiveness of each of the literary and art forms to convey ideas.

identify figures of speech in literature, specifically examining symbolism and foreshadowing.

MATERIALS:

Literature

Barren Ground . . . . . Ellen Glasgow

The Scarlet Letter . . . . . .Nathaniel Hawthorne

"The Revolt of Mother" . . . . . Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

"A New England Nun" . . . . . Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

"Tell Me a Riddle" . . . . . Tillie Olsen

"Mother and Daughter" . . . . . Anne Sexton

"Morning Song" . . . . . Sylvia Plath

"Sparks" . . . . . .Denise Leverton

"I like the way Her". . . . . .e. e. cummings

"The Invisible Woman . . . . . Robin Morgan

Film

"The American Woman: Portraits of Courage". . . . . McGraw Hill Films

"Matina Horner: Portrait of a Person". . . . . .Phoenix Films

Music

"Bill Wants a Doll" from "Free to Be You and Me" . . . . . Marlo Thomas

"I Am Woman" . . . . . .Helen Reddy

"Where You Lead" . . . . . .Carole King

"Just Like a Woman" . . . . . .Bob Dylan

Art

"Whistler's Mother" . . . . Whistler

"Mona Lisa" . . . . . .DaVinci

"The Birth of Venus". . . . . .Botticelli

"American Gothic" . . . . . Wood

ACTIVITIES:

Write on the board the words "male" and "female" as the headings for two lists. Have students list everything they think of as they consider these words. After all contributions are recorded, examine the lists for the following: What terms are ~~considered~~ listed for ~~each~~ both sexes? Which are stereotypes? Which indicate individual, emotional responses? Which have positive connotations? Which negative?

Ask the class to imagine that a being from another planet has arrived in this country. It clearly identifies with the male of our species but is confused about the female. Divide the class into groups to determine how they would explain what it is like to be a woman in the United States. It may be interesting to segregate the men in the class into a group of their own to compare and contrast their responses with the women in the class. Share the group explanations and include the following in the discussion of them: Do you create a positive or negative picture? How and why? Is your image idealistic or realistic? How does our language shape our behavior?

Define and discuss the impact of terms that will frequently appear during this unit such as sexism, male chauvinism, feminism, misogyny, stereotypes, androgyny, and patriarchy. (2 days)

After completing warm-ups for creative drama as described on pages 30 and 37, have students improvise the following situations:

1) a refrigerator salesman making his pitch to a woman, to a man, and to a husband and wife.
2) an auto salesman selling a car to a woman, to a man, and to a husband and wife.
3) a committee of men and women organizing a fund-raising dinner.

Discuss the following points after the improvisations: *How were roles* developed? To what extent was stereotyping evident? Discuss the language choices that occurred in each improvisation. Repeat the improvisations purposely trying to remove all stereotyping. Discuss the differences. (1 day)

Have students watch television for one and a half hours recording the number of women they see and what they are doing. Discuss the following points: What roles did their viewing offer to women viewers? If a child were to restrict his/her education of sex roles to those portrayed in their viewing, what would he/she learn? How accurately do these women reflect the actions and values of women in their lives? Play the songs "I Am Woman" and "Where You Lead." How do these songs portray women? Which reflects the television roles from their study? Compare and contrast the music of these two songs. (1 day)

Have students consider television wives such as Edith (All in the Family), Maude (Maude), Kate (Family), and Marion (Happy Days). Discuss the following: How are they portrayed? Are the portrayals accurate? Do you know women like these? With which can you identify?

Have students imagine that they are writers for a television studio. They have been assigned to create and describe a television wife that will appeal to the millions of women viewers who have complained about the stereotyped roles depicted so far. Share and discuss these characterizations. Look particularly at descriptions. (2 days)

Have students find examples of sexist language in newspapers and magazines. Share and discuss these findings. What alternatives to sexist language exist? How do you feel about using "man" to mean all people? What connotations exist in the terms "lady doctor" or "old maid?" How do terms such as these affect behavior? (1 day)

Divide your class into groups. Have each group bring a piece of children's literature to class. In the groups students search for evidence of sexism. Have students rewrite or select a familiar fairytale or nursery rhyme to rewrite eliminating sexist roles and attitudes as much as possible. Discuss the new stories. How are roles defined? What difficulties did students have in the revision? Follow this discussion with the playing of "Bill Wants a Doll." Discuss how effectively this song deals with the problem of sex role stereotyping for children. (3 days)

After creative drama warm-ups, have students role-play familiar situations such as a man and a woman on a date or a family at dinner. Review with students behavior that is typical to these roles prior to the role-playing. Have women play the female roles; men, the male roles. Following the role-playing discuss the accuracy of the portrayal. Was behavior consistent with the role? Were students comfortable in the roles? Reverse the role assignment: men play female roles; women play men's roles. Again evaluate the accuracy of portrayals. What problems arose? In what ways did behavior change? How did students feel in the reversed roles? (1 day)

Have students list on the chalkboard characteristics of someone who is successful. Compare these traits with those listed earlier in the unit for male and female. Are there more masculine than feminine terms? Discuss with students the masculine connotations that are apparent in these terms. Have students consider women who they feel to be successful. Do they have any of these characteristics?

View the film "Matina Horner: Portrait of a Person." How does she define success. Agree or disagree with her definition. (1 day)

To examine the role models that exist for women who want to rise above stereotyped roles, divide the class into groups to do library research on famous women in literature, science, art, politics, and labor. You may divide groups according to these categories or you may allow students to select a woman from any of these areas to investigate. Have students present their findings in pictorial forms (collage or picture story) or in a verbal presentation (formal report or panel) in which they relate personal background, professional accomplishments, and philosophies or goals. Follow the presentation with a discussion of the influence these women had on their time period, on each other, and on the women's movement. Discuss similarities and differences in their personalities and philosophies.

View the film "The American Woman: Portraits of Courage." Compare the information given by students with that given in the film. What goals and attitudes do these women offer as ideals for young women, for young men. To what extent can the students identify with these women? (5 days)

Have students write a speech for a woman announcing to their community her candidacy for President of the United States. The speech should include her qualifications, reasoning for running, goals for her administration, etc. Share and discuss these speeches in groups. Have students look specifically for clarity, effective verbs, unity, humor, and persuasive techniques. (2 days)

After sufficient warm-up activities, have students perform a Reader's Theatre with "I like the way Her." Discuss the interpretations and sexism of this poem. What differences are there between the roles of sex object and seductress? Are these roles developed and maintained primarily by men or women? Justify your answer. How do you account for the continued success of Playboy magazine?

Listen to "Just Like a Woman." How do you describe this male view of women? Compare and contrast Dylan's view with that of cummings. Which do you prefer? (1 day)

Write a letter to MS magazine expressing your opinions on or relating your experiences with sexism, roles, women's liberation, etc. Share and discuss these letters in groups. Criticism should focus on unity, clarity, and conciseness. Have students revise their letters and mail them. (2 days)

Have students build pantomime "monuments" (see page 31) in response to the oral reading of one or all of the following poems: "Mother and Daughter," "Morning Song," "Sparks," and "The Invisible Woman." Consider the following in discussion: Compare and contrast responses. What similarities and differences exist among the poems? How are women portrayed in these works? What is the nature of the relationship between women and children, women and each other, women and men, women and themselves as revealed in these poems? What messages do these poems express which relate to the theme of this unit? Consider the literary form of poetry. How do the individual poets use language effectively? What images are created? What symbolism exists?

Compare and contrast the style and content of these poems with the cummings poem. (1 day)

After the students have read and demonstrated an understanding of plot, setting, and characters of the novel Barren Ground, consider the following in discussion: What is your overall response to the novel? What was good/bad about it? What do you think of Dorinda and her family? How would you characterize Jason, Greylock, and Nathan Pedlar? How do you explain Jason's jilting of Dorinda? Why do you think Dorinda chose the life she did? What choice would you have made if you were Dorinda? Explain her relationship to the farm. In what ways might it be symbolic of her relationships with others? Why does she marry Nathan? Compare and contrast Dorinda to the other women studied in the unit. What stereotyped role does she best fit? Justify your answer. Explain the symbolism of the title. What is the theme of the novel? How does Glasgow emphasize the importance of the setting? Relate the theme to the overall theme of the unit. (3 days)

Barren Ground questions the validity of the role of wife for all women. Discuss this point and the alternatives to marriage that exist for women. What values do you place on these alternatives? Why? What values would Dorinda place on them. Read "A New England Nun." Discuss the term "old maid" as it relates to Louisa. To what extent does she fit the stereotype? Compare and contrast Louisa and Dorinda. What are the priorities of these women? To what extent can you identify with them? (1 day)

Have students read "The Revolt of Mother" and "Tell Me a Riddle." Have them share their responses. Then focus on the following: Characterize Mrs. Penn. Why do you think she waited until her husband was gone to move to the barn? How does Freeman reveal the relationships between the members of this family? What would you have done if you were Mrs. Penn? Consider the mother Eva. What kind of person does she appear to be to her family? Compare and contrast this facade with the true Eva. What is the nature of the relationship between Eva and her husband? How does Olsen reveal their feelings for each other? What is the theme of this story? Evaluate the effectiveness of Olsen's portrayal of death. Why do you think Olsen chose the stream of consciousness style of prose for this story? How does it strengthen and/or weaken the characters and theme? What do each of these stories say about marriage and motherhood? Agree or disagree with the authors. (1 day)

Have students write a review of a film, story, poem, or the novel studied in the unit. They should include an evaluation of character development, plot, theme, setting, the author's mood, and tone. Have them rate its effectiveness in dealing with the theme of this unit and recommend for or against it based on their opinion of the work. Share and discuss these reviews in groups. (2 days)

After reading The Scarlet Letter have students respond to the novel and discuss the following points being certain students have a clear understanding of plot, characters, setting, and theme. Define the female role represented by Hester. What other female roles are portrayed in the novel? Explain Hester's loyalty in the face of public disgrace. Do you feel that she is justified in her position. Why or why not? Describe the relationship of Hester to her daughter. Trace the growth of Hester's character from

weakness and shame to strength and pride. Compare Hester with Dorinda in Barren Ground. What are some of the statements about femininity that Hawthorne makes in this novel? Which of these exist today? What impact do you think Hawthorne's masculinity had on the development of character, theme, and tone of the novel? Discuss the symbolism in the novel. Find examples of foreshadowing. (3 days)

Have students select from their writing folder a paper they want to revise. Remind them of the many good writing characteristics that have been discussed in class. Students should keep in mind one or two general writing techniques (you may want to select them) as well as the specific items considered in small groups. Share and discuss these papers comparing them with the original writing. Write a final revision based on this discussion. (2 days)

Have students view prints: "Whistler's Mother," "Mona Lisa," "American Gothic," and "The Birth of Venus." Discuss the following points: How would you characterize the women in these paintings? With what types can they be identified? With which can you best identify? How do the artists convey their feelings about these women? What influence does the masculinity of the artist have on the paintings? Which women from the readings remind you of these paintings? Why?

Divide the class into 4 groups. Give each group a painting and have them write a new title for this work or a caption which reflects the thinking of the writers, the characters, and/or the class on roles of women in literature or society as related to this painting. Share these with the class. (1 day)

After warm-ups, have students role-play the following situation: Eva, Mrs. Penn, Dorinda, Louisa, and Hester are counseling a young, single woman who has just discovered that she is 4 weeks pregnant. The young man involved has agreed to marry her. The character of the young woman is not clearly defined so that the student playing her may shape her responses based on the most convincing advice given her by a character. Students playing women from the literature must behave in a manner consistent with the character as defined in the work. Discuss the interpretations of characters which are given. Freeze the action intermittently allowing other students to play the roles if they see a different interpretation. Discuss the activity. (1 day)

Have students write a chapter in a story involving a character from the reading in a new situation. The character must retain the same personality. Share and discuss the writing considering the effectiveness of dialogue, unity, characterization, and clarity. How accurately is the role portrayed? (2 days)

Arrange a "Meet the Press" interview session with students portraying the authors of the novels, stories, and poems read in this unit. The rest of the class will act as reporters asking questions of the panel which relate specifically to the writing or to current topics. Panel members must respond from the point of view of the writer they represent. (1 day)

As a culminating activity for this unit have the class create a wall

mural depicting the various roles for women, the different feelings about womanhood, and the goals and ideals that women may achieve as presented and discussed in this unit. Each student brings a contribution for the mural and relates its significance to the class. These items may represent attitudes of the students or those of the authors they have read.

When the mural is completed, have each student further synthesize the material in this unit by responding to the theme of the unit and/or the mural in writing. These papers should be evaluated as a final product; therefore, students should share their papers with others to receive criticism for final revision and editing. (5 days)

RESOURCES FOR UNITS

In this section, we have listed appropriate materials and have suggested possible activities for specific themes. We offer no structure; we have included a sampling of literature, all of which would not be used in any one unit. Teachers are urged to create their own units from these suggested resources.

THEME: Decisions

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL: Grades 10 - 12

MATERIALS:

Fiction/Nonfiction

Across Five Aprils	Irene Hunt
Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman	Ernest G. Gaines
Black Like Me	John H. Griffin
Bless the Beasts and the Children	Glendon Swarthout
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee	Dee Brown
Castle on the Border	Margot Benary-Isbot
Catcher in the Rye	J. D. Salinger
A Chance to Belong	Emma Atkins Jacobs
The Crucible	Arthur Miller
Death Be Not Proud	John Gunther
Edgar Allan	John Neufeld
Grapes of Wrath	John Steinbeck
Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain
I Am Third	Gale Sayers
Kidnapped	Robert Louis Stevenson
A Lantern in Her Hand	Beth Aldrich
The Learning Tree	Gordon Parks
Of Mice and Men	John Steinbeck
Old Man and the Sea	E. Hemingway
Old Mali and the Boy	D. R. Sherman
The Pearl	John Steinbeck
A Raisin in the Sun	Lorraine Hansberry
Scarlet Letter	Nathaniel Hawthorne
A Separate Peace	John Knowles
To Sir, With Love	E. R. Braithwaite
True Grit	Charles Portis
Tinkerbelle	Robert Manry
Up the Down Staircase	Bel Kaufman

Short Stories

"An Underground Episode"	Edmand Ward
"The Snob"	Worley Callaghan
"The Sculptor's Funeral"	Willa Cather
"The Open Boat"	Stephen Crane
"Sixteen"	Maureen Daly
"Barn Burning"	William Faulkner
"Old Man at the Bridge"	E. Hemingway
"The Lottery"	Shirley Jackson
"A Visit to Grandmother"	Wm. Kelley
"Flowers for Algernon"	Daniel Keyes
"The Parsley Garden"	William Saroyan
"The Long Summer"	Isabel Kilcrin
"The Lady or the Tiger?"	Frank Stockton
"To Build a Fire"	Jack London
"Flashing Spikes"	Frank O'Rourke
"The Cop and the Anthem"	O. Henry
"Early Marriage"	Conrad Richter
"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"	James Thurber
"The Country of the Blind"	H.G. Wells
"The Pacing Goose"	Jessamyn West
"The Split Cherry Tree"	Jesse Stuart
"A Boy and a Man"	James Ullman
"The Decision"	Tom Burnham
"A Pilot's Needs"	Mark Twain
"The Princess and the Tin Box"	James Thurber

Poetry

"Come Along in Then Little Girl" Edna St. Vincent Millay
"The Charge of the Light Brigade" Alfred Lord Tennyson
"To a Waterfowl" William Cullen Bryant
"The Road Not Taken" Robert Frost
"Birches" Robert Frost
"Mending Wall" Robert Frost
"Stopping by the Woods" Robert Frost
"Importance" Carol Combs
"Much Madness" Emily Dickinson
"The Sole Selects" Emily Dickinson
"Christ Climbed Down" Lawrence Ferlinghetti
"Contentment" Oliver Wendell Holmes
"Poem" Langston Hughes
"Richard Cory" Edwin Arlington Robinson

Films

"Claude" Pyramid Films
"The Hand" McGraw-Hill Films
"Reflections of Myself" - Guidance Associates
"Up is Down" Pyramid Films
"What Should I Do?" Disney Films
"A Time for Burning" McGraw-Hill Films
"On This Mountain" Dorian Films
"No Man Is An Island" Dana Productions

Art

"The Judgement of Solomon" - Nicolas Poussin
"St. Anthony Distributing His Wealth" - Stefano diGiovanni Sassetta
"Declaration of Independence" - John Turnbull

ACTIVITIES:

1. After sufficient warm-ups, have students improvise in the following situation:

A family has called a meeting to discuss and come to a decision on whether the father should accept a job in another state. It would mean a promotion and a raise in salary for the father. The family has lived in that particular town for ten years. The members of the family are a father, a mother, and two children, ages 16 and 12. After the improvisation, the class discussion might include, but not be limited to, the following points: What alternatives were discussed when making the decision? What values were placed on the alternatives by the individual family members? How did these values affect the decision made by the family? In what ways did individual decisions differ from the final family decision? To what extent did family members compromise?

The activity is most effective when used to introduce any of the literature, e.g., "The Road Not Taken," "The Lady or the Tiger," The Crucible.

2. To help students synthesize their feelings and ideas about decisions, have them list statements indicating some kinds of conflicts that require decision-making. Use the abstraction format: A decision is _____; e.g., A decision is being asked out by Boy #2, having already accepted a date with Boy #1.

Identify those abstractions which agree with the attitudes of selected authors in this unit. Have students analyze the statements for creative and clever use of language.

3. Have students focus their writing on a decision-making experience in their childhood. Follow the writing with a sharing/discussion in groups.

4. Divide the class into groups of five. Have each group select a conflict which has appeared in the reading or class discussion and develop a list of alternative decisions which will resolve the conflict. The group then decides which decision is best for its members. Share the decisions with the class and follow with a discussion of interaction techniques used by the small groups. Include in the discussion: To what extent did each member contribute to the decision process? Give evidence that good listening skills were used. List the specific roles that emerged in the discussion. Did these interfere in any way with the group process? etc.

THEME: Death

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL: Grades 10-12

MATERIALS:

Fiction/Nonfiction

Brian's Song	William Blinn	Bang the Drum Slowly	Mark Harris
The Bell Jar	Sylvia Plath	Death Be Not Proud	John Gunther
A Fine and Private Place	Peter Beagle	Eric	Doris Lund
I Am 15 and I Don't Want to Die	Christine Arnothy	Jennifer	Zoa Sherburne
Love Story	Erich Segal	A Death in the Family	James Agee
Dreamland Lake	Richard Peck	The Execution of Private Slovick	William Bradford Huie
Go Ask Alice	Anonymous	The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter	Carson McCullers
The Learning Tree	Gordon Parks	The Loners	Nancy Garden
The Red Pony	John Steinbeck	Sunshine	Norma Klein

Drama

"The Sandbox	Edward Albee	"Our Town"	Thornton Wilder
"Antigone"	Jean Anouilh	"Death of a Salesman"	Arthur Miller

Short Stories

"All the King's Horses"	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	"A Summer Tragedy"	Arna Bontemps
"The Boarded Window"	Ambrose Bierce	"The Lottery"	Shirley Jackson
"The Manned Missiles"	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	"The Old Demon"	Pearl Buck
"The Sniper"	Liam O'Flaherty	"Young Goodman Brown"	N. Hawthorne
"On the Sidewalk Bleeding"	Evan Hunter	"Miriam"	Truman Capote
"Tell Me a Riddle"	Tillie Olsen		

Poetry

"Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?"	Thomas Hardy	"Annabel Lee"	Edgar Allan Poe

"Barbara Allan" Anonymous
"Death Be Not Proud" John Donne
"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" Dylan Thomas
"The Cremation of Sam McGee" Robert Service
"Out, Out—" Robert Frost
"Crossing the Bar" Alfred Lord Tennyson
"Because I Could Not Stop for Death" Emily Dickinson
"Death of the Hired Man" Robert Frost
"Richard Cory" Edwin Arlington Robinson
"Bredon Hill" A. E. Housman
"To An Athlete Dying Young" A. E. Housman
"Requiem" Robert Louis Stevenson

Films/Filmstrips

"Gramp" Sunburst Communications
"Living with Dying" Sunburst Communications
"Perspectives on Death" Sunburst Communications
"To Die Today" Filmakers Library, Inc.
"Death" Filmakers Library, Inc.
"The Hangman" Contemporary Films
"The Parting" Wombat Productions
"Death and Dying: The Circle" Guidance Associates

ACTIVITIES:

1. To help students synthesize their feelings and ideas about death, have them list statements indicating what death means to them. Use the abstraction format: Death is _____. Identify those abstractions which agree with the attitudes of selected authors in your unit, e.g., Blinn, Plath, Vonnegut, Donne, Thomas.

2. Take students to cemeteries, especially old ones, to analyze art work and language on tombstones. Discuss art work as representative of earlier periods and beliefs concerning death; study language used in epitaphs. Follow up this activity with an original tombstone with artwork and writing consistent with attitudes of each student who creates it.

3. For a language activity, have students list various euphemisms used when people speak/write about death. Discuss the value of euphemisms. Would students rather have the euphemistic term or the actual words used? In what situations? Why?

4. Have students focus their writing on the topic "I have 6 months to live." What would they do first? What experiences would they want to have? Who would they want to see? Visit? Share writing in groups.

5. Have students choose one of the following quotes and develop a well-structured piece of writing. Students should develop their positions on the thesis they choose and support them with ideas offered by authors read in the unit.

> "Death is sometimes a punishment, often a gift; to many, it has been a favor." -- Seneca
>
> "Death: kind nature's signal of retreat." -- Samuel Johnson
>
> "Death, however, is a spongy wall, is a sticky river, is nothing at all..." -- Edna St. Vincent Millay

6. Through improvisation, have students present a situation involving death or dying. Students assume the roles of selected characters from literature in the unit and resolve a problem/concern by improvising in the manner of and from the point of view of those characters.

THEME: Science Fiction

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL: Grades 10-12

MATERIALS:

Fiction/Nonfiction

Alas, Babylon	Pat Frank	Dune	Frank Herbert
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1984	George Orwell
A Canticle for Leibowitz	Walter Miller	The Time Machine	H.G. Wells
Caves of Steel	Isaac Asimov	Childhood's End	Arthur Clark
Earth Abides	George Stewart	Slaughterhouse-Five	Kurt Vonnegut,Jr.
Fahrenheit 451	Ray Bradbury	War of the Worlds	H.G. Wells
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	The Martian Chronicles	Ray Bradbury
Out of the Silent Planet	C.S. Lewis	R is for Rocket	Ray Bradbury
Stranger in a Strange Land	Robert Heinlein	On the Beach	Neville Shute
Visit to a Small Planet	Gore Vidal	Star Trek	James Blish
West World	Michael Crichton	Fantastic Voyage	Isaac Asimov
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea	Jules Verne	Planet of the Apes	Pierre Boulle
Cat's Cradle	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	Flowers for Algernon	Daniel Keyes

Short Stories

"Grandpa"	James Schmitz	"The Midas Plague"	Frederik Pohl
"The Sound of Thunder"	Ray Bradbury	"All Summer in a Day"	Ray Bradbury
"Traffic Problem"	William Harris	"The Man Who Came Early"	Poul Anderson
"Devil Car"	James Zelazney	"Soldier"	Harlan Ellison
"The Winner"	Donald Westlake	"Puppet Show"	Fredric Brown
"The Handler"	Damon Knight	"Random Sample"	T.P. Caravan
"Harrison Bergeron"	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	"The Good Provider"	Marion Gross
"The Inn Outside the World"	Edmond Hamilton	"The Third Level"	Jack Finney
"The Ifth of Oofth"	Walter Trevis	"Earthmen Bearing Gifts"	Fredric Brown
"The Census Takers"	Frederik Pohl	"There Will Come Soft Rains"	Ray Bradbury
"Autofac"	Philip Dick	"Disappearing Act"	Alfred Bester
"By the Waters of Babylon"	Stephen Vincent Benet	"The Large Ant"	Howard Fast
"The Sound Machine"	Roald Dahl	"The King of the Beasts"	Philip Jose Farmer

Poetry

"Man-Made Satellite"	Louis Ginsberg	"The Secret of Mars"	John Fletcher
"Interlude III"	Karl Shapiro	"A Man Said to the Universe"-	Stephen Crane
"Electronic Tape Found in a Bottle"	Olfa Cabral	"Toward the Space Age"	Wm. Stafford

"Univac to Univac" Louis Salmoon
"The Unknown Citizen" W.H. Auden
"Southbound on the Freeway" May Swenson
"We'll All Be Spacemen Before We Die" Mike Evans
"Space Man" Babette Deutsch
"I Want My Name in the Title" Winona McClintic
"I, Too" Langston Hughes
"Electronic Concert" Babette Deutsch
"Speed" Josephine Miles
"Voyage to the Moon" William Dickey
"Crab-Apple Crisis" George MacBeth

Films/Filmstrips

"Epilogue" Benchmark Films
"The Crowd" Learning Corp. of Am.
"Science Fiction: Jules Verne to Ray Bradbury" Center on Humanities
"Things to Come" Scholastic
"A Child's Garden of Pollution" ABC Media Concepts
"Computers and You" Journal Films
"A Day in the Night of Jonathan Mole" - National Film Board of Canada
"Science Fiction" Scholastic
"Beyond Our Solar System" - Coronet Films
"Omega" Pyramid Films
"At Home: 2001" McGraw-Hill

Records

"The Time Machine" H.G. Wells

ACTIVITIES:

Organize your Science Fiction unit around the following headings: Technology, Literary Forms, Character Development, Social Comment, New Worlds-Time, New Worlds-Space. Have students group themselves around one of these areas and select a major piece of literature that would be representative of that area. Have each group after reading the work prepare a presentation to the entire class, e.g., collage, panel discussion, interview.

Have students focus their writing around a character description. Have students create and describe "an intelligent creature from space." In their writing, students should emphasize colorful and explosive verbs and descriptive modifiers.

After having students read selected pieces of literature, have them create their own utopia. Students should include their utopian climate, transportation, housing, language, clothes, etc. After completing the utopia, students should share with the class.

THEME: People Under Pressure

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL: Grades 7-9

MATERIALS:

Fiction/Nonfiction

The Pearl John Steinbeck
The Summer of Swans Betsy Byars

The Butterfly Revolution	Wm. Butler	Bless the Beasts and the Children	Glendon Swarthout
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee		

Short Stories

"Poison"	Roald Dahl	"Daniel"	from the Bible
"Scarface"	George Bird Grinnell	"Places We Lost"	Mary Hedin

Poems

"Directions to the Armorer"	Elder Olson	"Forgive My Guilt"	Robert P. Tristram
"Dirge Without Music"	Edna St. Vincent Millay	"Mother to Son"	Langston Hughes

Drama

"The Diary of Anne Frank"	Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett	"The Crucible"	Arthur Miller

Records

"Romeo and Juliet"	Peter Tchaikovsky	"Sounds of Silence"	Simon & Garfunkle
"Where Have All the Flowers Gone"	Pete Seeger	"Annie's Song"	John Denver

Art

"The Colossus or Panic"	Francisco de Goya	"The Hippopotamus Hunt"	Peter Paul Reubens
"Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War"	Salvador Dali	"The Battle of San Romano"	Paolo Uccello
		"Akbar Present at an Armed Combat of Contending Ascetics"	Basawan

Films/Filmstrips

"Claude"	Pyramid Films	"Up is Down"	Pyramid Films

ACTIVITIES:

1. Divide the class into groups of five. Provide the groups with five boxes each containing ideas for one of the following categories: heroes, villains, problems, solutions, settings. Have each group draw an idea from each box and create a story using these five elements. In creating these stories, students should be aware of qualities and elements of good writing such as effective beginnings, descriptive words, a variety of active verbs, clarity, unity. Share the stories with the class.

2. Have students prepare a collage of the pressures of adolescence, school, childhood, or adulthood using words and pictures from magazines and newspapers. Share the collages with the class. Discuss how the pressures represented in the student collages compare to those found

in the readings. Have students discuss how selected characters would handle the pressures exhibited in the collages.

3. Have students create a set of questions which would ask specific characters/authors from the readings to clarify their positions on an issue, to justify their actions, to compare/contrast their value systems with others, to elaborate on the motivation for a decision that was made, and to evaluate the results of their decisions.

4. Create a panel of students who role-play characters/authors that have been read or studied in the unit. The rest of the class asks questions developed in activity #3 of the panel members. Students on the panel should respond from the point of view and in the manner of the characters/authors.

THEME: Success-Failure

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL: Grades 7-9

MATERIALS:

Fiction/Nonfiction

When the Legends Die — Hal Borland
Where the Lilies Bloom — Vera and Bill Cleaver
The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou — Kristin Hunter
A Separate Peace — John Knowles
Tom Sawyer — Mark Twain
A Room Made of Windows — Eleanor Cameron
The Ra Expeditions — Thor Heyerdahl
His Enemy, His Friend — John Tunis
I'm Really Dragged, But Nothing Gets Me Down — Nat Hentoff
Sports Heroes Who Wouldn't Quit — Hal Butler
The Miracle Worker — William Gibson
It's Good to Be Alive — Roy Campanella
Onion John — Joseph Krumgold
Mr. and Mrs. BoJo Jones — Ann Head
Lord of the Flies — William Golding
Queenie Peavy — Robert Burch
Shane — Jack Schaefer
The Rock and the Willow — Mildred Lee
My Enemy, My Brother — James Forman
The End of Innocence — Donald Honig
The Contender — Robert Lipsyte
The Red Pony — John Steinbeck
Brian Piccolo: A Short Season — Jeanie Morrison
Buried Alive: The Biography of Janis Joplin — Myra Friedman

Short Stories

"The Ingenious Patriot" — Ambrose Bierce
"To Build a Fire" — Jack London
"The Fifty-Yard Dash" — William Saroyan
"My Childhood" — James Baldwin
"Marigolds" — Eugenia Collier
"The Most Important Day" — Helen Keller
"The Destructors" — Graham Greene
"Shark" — Ramon Ferreira
"The Necklace" — Guy de Maupassant
"Jug of Silver" — Truman Capote
"The One-Girl Team" — R. Freedman
"Abe Lincoln Grows Up" — Carl Sandburg
"Simple on Indian Blood" — Langston Hughes

Poetry

"The Man He Killed" Thomas Hardy
"The Charge of the Light Brigade" Alfred Lord Tennyson
"Plunger" Langston Hughes
"Flying Crooked" Robert Graves
"Freedom" William Stafford
"Casey at the Bat" E.L. Thayer
"Losers" Carl Sandburg
"The Average" W.H. Auden
"Anthem for Doomed Youth" Wildred Owen
"Eldorado" Edgar Allan Poe
"The Rest" Ezra Pound
"Do You Fear the Wind?" Hamlin Garland
"Pitcher" R. Francis
"Ex-Basketball Player" John Updike
"Mother to Son" Langston Hughes
"No One in Particular" John Perreault
"Out, Out—" Robert Frost

Film/Filmstrips

"Claude" Pyramid Films
"The Daisy" MacMillan Films
"Leo Beurman" Centron Corp.
"Human Relationships: Why They Succeed or Fail - Part 2" - The Center for Humanities, Inc.

Records

"Richard Cory" Simon and Garfunkle
"Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road" Elton John
"Eleanor Rigby" Paul McCartney and John Lennon
"In the City" Stevie Wonder

ACTIVITIES:

1. As an introductory activity have students bring and share a symbol of success for them. The symbol can be an object or a picture of the object which represents their success. Follow with a discussion which might include but not be limited to the following questions:
   A. What determines success?
   B. In what ways does success change as a person matures?
   C. How did others react to your success?
   D. How have your successes changed your values? outlook and goals?
   E. If your success was the result of diligence and aspiration, what made you decide to work for it? Once attained how did its value change? Would you do it all again?

2. Treat failure in a similar way as suggested in activity #1.

3. As an exercise in oral English have students improvise the following situations:
   A. The son has just returned home after the fifth straight day of job hunting and reports his failure to his family.
   B. A girl and her group of friends have just read the list of names of girls making the final cut for the basketball team. Her name is not on the list.
   C. A mother returns home one evening to announce to her family that she has been fired.
   D. A father has just lost an election in which he was an incumbent for a seat on the school board. His family has just learned of the defeat.

The following questions might be appropriate in a discussion after three or four of the improvisations:

(1) In what ways did people react differently to the same situation? Explain the differences.
(2) What other reactions to the failures are possible that were not portrayed?
(3) How are the failures of these people similar? How are they different?
(4) What comparisons/contrasts can you make between what occurred in these improvisations and the failures of characters from the reading?

4. Have students respond to the theme in writing by giving a personal experience with success or failure, a stream-of-consciousness response to the meanings of success/failure, or a fictional representation of their feelings about success/failure. Writing should be shared and constructively criticized in small groups.